The Bison-horn Marias (and, I believe, many of the Murias also) have similar ideas of it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to thresh or winnow. They are not so particular about the cessation of conjugal life between the sowing and sprouting of the crops, and between their coming into ear and being garnered. They use bullocks to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Each cultivator has to take the help of his fellow villagers to carry his corn, but it is a service for which he hires them, and not a routine piece of communal village service in gathering the village crop as in the Abujhmar hills. 241

The new-eating festivals of the Hill Marias

It is taboo to eat any of the new crops until the appropriate new-eating festival has been celebrated.[a] These are very similar to the *pandum* festivals of the Bison-horn Marias, which will be described in the chapter on religion; but they are less elaborate and are fewer in number; the Bison-horn Maria seems to have a *pandum* as an essential preliminary to almost every act of gathering the produce of field or forest. The Hill Maria has only three, or, in villages where the last festival is held as late as March or early April, four of these festivals. The first is known either as *Tur Korta Tindana* or *Amu Korta Tindana*, according as the chief of the early ripening rains crops is *Panicum miliare* (*turya-kohala*) or *Panicum frumentaceum* (*amu*), and is held at the end of Hagh, that is about the middle of August. In Eranj (September) comes *Hikka Korta Tindana* in villages, like Handawada, where there is no rice cultivation, and *hikka* (see p. 134 above) is the chief crop ripening next after the August crops; where much rice (*wanj*) is grown, *Wanj Korta Tindana* is celebrated instead at the end of Eram (middle of October). This is followed in Pusi (January) in the villages where the final festival is celebrated after February by *Kohala Korta Tindana*, the first eating of the main *Panicum miliaceum* (*kutki*) crop. The last and greatest festival, held on dates varying from the end of January till early April in different clan-areas, is *Pupal Korta Tindana*, combined with *Koqsar*, the clan-god's festival; when this takes place early enough in the year to be economically convenient, it is the new-eating festival not only of *urad* (*pupal; Phaseolus radiatus*) and other pulses and beans, but also of *kutki* and the other late ripening hill grains. '*Korta Tindana*' is Hinduized literally as '*nawa khana*', 'new eating'. A main reason for the varying dates of this last festival is that dancing is permissible only at it, at weddings and at the camps of touring officials. The round of festivities after the final harvest-home is prolonged by celebrating the festival clan after clan; all the youths of neighbouring clans go to dance at each other's *Koqsar*, 796 ● [535]

[a] [see cat. 116, p. 420. -Analyst]

● 796 and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

796 [614 776] The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

796 The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, 796 187 and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent 796 omen. When making his offerings, the *kasyeq-gaita* adjures the Mother to remain favourable to the village.

All return then to the clan-god, and here the clan-priest offers for each village some of the new grain and cuts the throat of the cocks and pigs brought by each *hasyeq-gaita*, sprinkling blood from each victim on the clan-god, on whom he calls to be ever present to help them, in weal or woe, in field or forest, at home or abroad. In the less important new-eatings, if the practice among the Bardal clan observed in August 1930 at Kutul is universal, the flesh of the sacrificed animals is not then eaten in a communal feast, but divided among the men present, each of whom takes it to his home, where the male members of the family alone eat it with new grain. Some liquor is drunk in the houses by the men and the unmarried girls, but this is not an essential part of the proceedings. The [273] fermented rice gruel, *landa*, which is always freely consumed at Bison-horn Maria *pandums*, is never even manufactured by Hill Marias, who say that it is taboo to them. After the return of each village delegation to its village, the local *kasyeq-gaita* (whether there is a *bhum-gaita* or not) performs a similar ceremony on a smaller scale before his Village Mother; this in some clan-areas is attended by the clan-priest also, as a guest, but not as a celebrant except in a few large villages to which the clan-god is brought for the occasion; in some other villages a cairn or table-stone is set up near the Village Mother's shrine, and, like her shrine, sprinkled with blood. Nor are the Departed forgotten, for they, too, can 769 harm the garnered crops or the next harvest. The housewife pounds the new grain before the festival in a specially made mortar hole with a pestle (*uspal*) washed in water newly drawn from a running stream. She cooks it in the *lonu* room on the Hearth of the Departed (see p. 114 above), and the ashes of this fire are never swept away. In the evening, before the new food is eaten, she places a little as an offering on the floor just in front of the Pot of the Departed, with some appropriate adjuration; and some she places in three *siari* leaves, which in the early morning her husband deposits outside the village by the side of some path (never, apparently, at the cemetery or the Stones of the Dead (*hotokal*)), saying, '*Kopa-kopi muneta tado-pepi kisor mator, ade hintoram*,' meaning, 'We give what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to give to their ancestors of old.'

The association of the clan-god with the three first new-eatings 796 is not so marked as at the last, which is the harvest-home celebration. The tendency is to regard them more as domestic than even village ceremonies. No dancing or drumming is allowed at them, and no

one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is
796 preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance
ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the
permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman
sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and
collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon
all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there
the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan,
or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They
hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old
winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up
[481] on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make
these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till
this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some
[784] reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo
throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old
winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important
occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be
that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought
from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths
to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food
for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the
ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan
new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual
way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the
cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the
clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided
up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the
grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots
kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew
is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or
bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great
circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves
a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The
[535 *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that
follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar
834] country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which
it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual
[533] intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten
with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana*
796 before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially
622 where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

796 622

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

224 262

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

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It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

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[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER XI

THE ANNUAL RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES OF THE BISON-HORN MARIAS

796 IN Chapter VII, on Maria agriculture, which was treated chiefly from the point of view of Hill Maria agriculture as being far less advanced than Bison-horn Maria agriculture, the Hill Maria festivals and ceremonies were described. The Bison-horn Marias have many more ceremonies and a much more elaborate ceremonial, and though these are as closely connected with the agricultural calendar of the year as those of the Hill Marias, they are best described here in a separate chapter than in Chapter VII where a description of them would have wrecked the balance of the description of agriculture.

The Irpu Pandum

It would, from the agricultural point of view, perhaps be logical to start the account of the *pandum* festivals and *weta* ceremonial hunts from the Kare Pandum of Magh month, held early in February, because until it has taken place it is *melo* or taboo to cut timber for *erka* and *parka* cultivation; in another sense, however, it is one of the last festivals of the year, for its holding also signalizes the lifting of the taboo against the reaping of the forest grass crop and of bamboos, and it follows soon after the Jata Pandum at which new *urad*, beans and pulses are eaten for the first time. The Bhimul Pandum that comes next, in the middle of February, is also designed to secure satisfactory rain for the coming year, but is not described first because it makes the account of all the *pandum* clearer and briefer to begin with those on which there is the fullest information. The Irpu or Idu Pandum, or *mahua* flowers first-fruits ceremony, which is held soon after the Bhimul Pandum, is therefore taken as the first ceremony of the year. In some parts it is combined with the Marka Pandum, the mango first-fruits ceremony; but, at all events to the south of the Bison-horn country, it is quite separate and more important, as the *mahua* tree plays a more important part than the mango in not only the economic but also the religious life of the people. The *perma* of the village fixes the day, which is always a Friday in the bright half of the month, in consultation with the headman (*peda*) and elders about a week beforehand. On the [834] night before the ceremony all the men observe sexual continence,[1] and in the morning assemble at the *mahua* tree in the *perma's* field, the *perma* bringing a cock and a little milk and husked rice. The *perma* cleans a small rectangle at the foot of the tree, sets the egg upright on it, and strews the rice in front of the egg. The cock is set down on its feet, and as soon as it pecks up a grain or two of the rice, the *perma* cuts its throat in the name of the Village Mother, whom he prays to accept the egg and the cock offered by the village, and to bless them with a bumper crop of *mahua* flowers and fruit. He then pours milk over the trunk of the tree and some of the clusters of *mahua* flowers, and prays to the milk-spirits Pal-mu'ito and Pal-mutta'i (Milk-old-man and Milk-old-woman) to shower upon them *mahua* flowers fat with milk. Next he throws the egg over the tree, calling on Nus-mu'ito and Nus-muttai (Insect-old-man and Insect-old-woman; *nus* is a grub or insect that attacks the ends of the twigs from which burst the *mahua* flowers) not to damage the flowers. Then all the men present quickly gather up dead *mahua* leaves lying around beneath the tree and put them into the baskets that they use for collecting *mahua* flowers, pretending that they are flowers; the idea, of course, is to act the gathering of a crop of flowers as thick as the carpet of dead leaves, and to persuade the trees in sympathy with this magic to yield a generous crop. The *perma* then takes the sacrificed cock as his portion, and all disperse to their homes. Before this ceremony has been held it is taboo to collect *mahua* flowers.

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[1] Sexual continence is the rule on the night before every *pandum*.

The Marka Pandum

The mango first-fruits ceremony is held generally a little later, in March, the *perma* convening a similar meeting of the elders to fix the day as soon as he sees that the young fruit has formed on the trees, and to arrange either for a *sari-bori* village subscription for buying the sacrificial victims or for getting the victims from those whose turn it is to give them at this *pandum*. We have seen already (pp. 165-6) that this is sometimes preceded by a ceremonial fishing beat or *weta*, [769] and by pouring of water in the name of the Departed. All the males of the village assemble on the morning of the *pandum* by the *perma's hadri-bera* field, the head of each family bringing a pig or a cock, a pot of *landa* or *mahua* spirit, cooking pots, and a pound of husked rice or *kutki* for each member of his family present. For this festival sometimes instead of using the *kadri-bera* field they resort to a mango grove, a grove of trees by a stream, or a clump of forest trees thickly covered with creepers, often on a hill-top, and known as a *deo-kot*; the site is always reserved for such ceremonies, and it is taboo to pluck even a leaf in them. There should be a sacred *saja* tree there. At the foot of this tree a space is cleaned and smeared with cow-dung and water, over which a table-stone is set up on three or four small stones, to serve as the *gadi* or throne

796 of the god, in this *pandum* generally known as Kodo Pen. The *perma* puts a round white stone on this throne in Kodo Pen's name, strews wet rice on the ground in front of the stone, and arranges eggs at the side of the rice. The *perma* then puts his own cock down to see if it will eat the rice, as in the case of the sacrificial victims at the Irpu Pandum, and then in turn the cock produced by each head of a family is put through the test; the process is called the *tohana* of the cocks. If any cock refuses to touch the rice, the *perma* asks its owner whether he has promised the god any other sacrifice, and if the owner says he has no recollection of having done so, the *perma* turns to the cock, and says, 'If he promised an egg, I command you to pick up the rice; if he promised a pig, I command you, etc.' and so on, suggesting further victims; and the owner is expected to provide the last victim suggested before the cock picks up the rice. When all have been through the *tohana*, the *perma* with the sacred knife cuts off the heads of the cocks and pigs, cutting them from the throat upwards, and sprinkles the blood of each victim over the god, the rice and the eggs. He heaps the heads together, and hands the bodies back to the owners of the victims. He then pours a little *landa* and *mahua* spirit on the white stone representing the god, places two or three unripe green mangoes on the 'throne' beside him, bends to the earth before him with his palms pressed flat on the earth, belches, and prays to the god to save them from all sickness and adversity, now that they have offered him the new mangoes. He then bows his head to the ground, rises and stands facing the sun, whom, with folded hands, he calls on to be a witness that the *pandum* has been performed. When the *mahua* first-fruits ceremony is combined with the *Marka Pandum*, *mahua* flowers are offered along with the green mangoes, and cooked and eaten at the feast that follows. After addressing the sun, the *perma* gives back to each family the head of its cock, and these are fried and eaten with *landa* or *mahua* spirit. The men of each family then cook the rice and the bodies of their sacrificed pigs or cocks in the cooking pots that they have brought with them, along with some green mangoes and *mahua* flowers; and they sit in a circle and eat the food, washing it down with more liquor, before returning with their cooking pots to their houses. The *perma* cooks and eats his own sacrificial meat with his brothers and sons apart from the rest, and hangs his cooking pot with the sacred knife inside it on some tree in the sacred grove before going home. On the next day, as after most of these *pandum* feasts, the head of each family observes in his house the *Hara Tindana* (Halbi, *Basi Tihar*) or 'remains-eating' feast, to which he bids his womenfolk and his friends, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from

PLATE XVI

THE SACRIFICE BEFORE THE *WIJJA-WETA*
The offerings before the altar of bows

[facing p. 210]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

[face p. [illegible]

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796

796 other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and [784] girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* [535] dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion [273] in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise [834] rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* [515] or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the [787] pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens 796 does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the 778 place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

796 [778] heap offers an egg and a tooth-stick (*datun*), sometimes also a miniature bow and arrow; he then takes up each tooth-stick in turn, splits it and throws down the split halves to test the omens in the way already described, after praying with folded hands to the Forest-maidens for success in the hunt and protection from wild beasts. Then he takes an arrow off the altar, and, holding it by the shaft just above the feathering, cuts the top of each egg with the sharp edge of the arrow-head.

796 224 The omens having thus been taken, and the bows and arrows of the altar, if any, reclaimed by their owners, all the men go off with their weapons in the *weta* ritual hunt to beat the forest for game. The women appear with pots full of cow-dung and water, into which they dip sprays of leaf and shower the foul water with fouler abuses on any laggards. If any animal is slain, the shedding of much blood on the ground is regarded as foreshadowing plentiful rainfall and a rich harvest; on the spot where it falls they cut little bits off the tips of its ears, nose, tongue, feet and tail, place each bit on a separate *saja* leaf on the ground in the name of the Forest-maidens or of Karenga Deo, and pray for a continuance of this good fortune. At the end of the hunt they take the carcasses of the animals back to the *mahua* bough erected in the name of the Village Mother in the *kadri-bera* field, and leave them there. They then go home for supper.

796 Towards midnight each man returns to the *kadri-bera* with his bow and arrows, a small packet of *kutki* and other grain seeds wrapped up in leaves, a little *mahua* liquor and a white cock; a pig is also brought for all the villagers. Some villages do not expect each man to bring a cock, but purchase a number of cocks by *sari-bori* subscription. The men hand over the packets of seed to the *perma*, who piles them on the ground in front of the *mahua* bough and places his sacrificial knife beside them. He then prostrates himself before the *mahua* bough and prays to the Village Mother for good and timely rain and bumper crops. He then puts each cock and the pig through the *tokana* rice-eating test, and sacrifices them one by one, cutting their heads off from the throat upwards, piling the heads all together near the *mahua* bough, and holding each body over the pile of seed-packets and the *mahua* bough to soak them well with blood; he then throws the bodies aside. Next he breaks with his knife in the Mother's name the egg which he had set up in the morning, and pours some *mahua* spirit on the ground before the *mahua* bough. The *perma* and the men of his family then roast and eat the heads of the cocks and the pig, and each other family the body of the cock contributed by it; when cocks have been bought by subscription, the *perma* slices

them up and distributes them. The pig, cooked with rice, is next apportioned among all present and eaten.

Meanwhile some boil the rice brought by each villager, and the carcasses of the animals killed in the afternoon ritual hunt are skinned, cut up and roasted, after the head and the legs below the knees and hocks have been cut off, taken to the hut-temple of Mata and tied with ropes to wooden roof-posts in front of the goddess. The *perma* and all the men, when the meat is cooked, drink liquor and eat the meat; by that time, however, many have had enough, and carry off their share to their houses to eat later.

Women take no part in this feast and may not be present, except that they are expected to meet the successful huntsmen on their return and dance and sing in front of the bodies of the animals killed in the hunt as they are taken to the *kadri-bera*.

When the eating is over, the *perma* takes up his own packet of blood-stained seed, and hands each man his packet. They take them off to their houses, and place them carefully on the storage platform inside the *wijjalon* room of their houses.

By this time it is daylight, and they must all start out on another ritual hunt after the usual preliminary offerings to the Forest-maidens and omen-taking. If any animal is slain, the usual portions are then and there offered to the Forest-maidens on *saja* leaves in the forest, and at the end of the hunt the bodies are brought back, greeted as before by dancing women, and taken, not to the *kadri-bera*, but to a shed prepared in the village for that purpose. Sexual intercourse is no longer taboo, and the dancing [834] that follows ends in the men getting their own back for the abuses with which the women drove them out to the hunt.

The next day they cut up the carcasses left in the shed overnight, and divide the meat; first the head, intestines and the legs below the knees and hocks are set on one side; then the man who killed the animal in the hunt is given the rest of the off hind leg and sometimes some meat from each side of the backbone, the *peda* (not in all villages), the saddle, and the *waddai*, if any, or the *kanal-gaita*[1] (again in some villages only), the liver; and lastly the balance is divided among all the men, including those who have already received privileged portions. Each takes off the meat to his own house, for the *Hara Tindana* remains-eating feast for his women, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives. But before they start this feast, one of the villagers on behalf of the village takes a cock and an egg to the priest of Mata's hut-temple. The priest sacrifices them to her, and in return restores the heads and legs tied up in the temple after the first ritual hunt. The villager brings them back

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[1] Priest of the Departed, alias *pitar-gaita*. See p. 217 below.

796 to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-karsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

796 241 [789] It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*wadde*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

Hareli

796 Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

perma's house and take him to the hut of the log-god, if there is one in the village, or to Mata's hut (the Mata-guri). No animal is sacrificed, but the *perma* lights a fire in front of the god or goddess, burns a little ghee or sal (*Shorea robusta*) resin in the fire, and bows before the deity; each elder does the same. The *perma* then fixes in the thatched roof of the shrine a leafy spray of the marking-nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*) and a spray of the *sitawari* creeper, and sends the congregation out to the forest to get *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) branches to stick in the centre of each of their fields. They adorn the *tendu* branches at the top with a leafy marking-nut twig and a spray of *sitawari*, and fix them upright in the centre of each rice, *erka* and *penda* field, sometimes pouring a little milk over them; the idea seems to be to indicate by the branch a tall and well-branched plant such as each rice or *kutki* seed sown in the field should produce. They then bathe in the nearest pool or river, and fix a spray of marking-nut and of *sitawari* in the thatch of their houses. They then eat roast pork or fowl in their houses, and drink *landa*, entertaining those too poor to afford a dinner of their own, and giving salt to their cattle. Nothing is offered to the Departed at this festival.

The Kurum Pandum

The Kurum Pandum is observed towards the end of August, and is the earliest of the new-eating or first-fruits ceremonies of the cultivated crops, in this case the early-ripening millets off the *erka* and *penda* fields, especially *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*). It is sometimes called Kadi Pandum. In ordinary villages where there is no log-god the first part of the celebrations takes part at the *kadri-bera* field before the Bhimul post, which for this ceremony is regarded as the Village Mother. Early in the morning of the appointed day the women clean the ground in front of their houses, wash their floors with cow-dung and water, and then go to a pool to bathe and wash their husbands' and children's clothes. Those who can afford it get new clothes for the *pandum*. Towards noon the men assemble at the *kadri-bera* field, and the usual rectangle is cleared and cleaned by the *perma* around the Bhimul post; but for this ceremony they make a dwarf fence of *saja* twigs stuck in the ground on three sides of the rectangle, and carpet the rectangle with *saja* leaves. The *perma* stands to the west of the Bhimul post, and, facing the east, addresses it as the Village Mother, praying to her and bowing before her. The villagers subscribe for a pig, a white cock and eggs for a sacrifice; sometimes even now a young bull or heifer is stolen for this purpose. The *perma*, as usual, brings wet rice for the *tqhana* test of the victims, and spreads it on the *saja* leaves, laying the eggs in a row before the goddess. He sacrifices the cock and

796 pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice [788] stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend [784] the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched [252] in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small [769] chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *kortam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the *perma* with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and 796 the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms [177] *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikma* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikma*, [769] set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikma* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tokana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikma* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *peda* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

796 Nowhere, so far as can be ascertained, are any offerings made at the *uraskal* menhir stones for the Departed.

After this *pandum* everyone is free to eat the new early millets and garden vegetables other than gourds, cucumbers, beans and pulses. The practice as to mountain rice varies, for there is still the Korta Pandum or rice first-fruits ceremony to follow. In some places people are free to use and cook the new mountain rice in any way they like after the Kurum Pandum. In others it must be cooked or roasted without being first washed in water until the Nuka Nordana Pandum has been held, which coincides roughly with Diwali.

The Korta Pandum

The Korta Pandum comes about a month after the Kurum Pandum, and celebrates the first eating of the new rice of the main crop, and of new cucumbers, pumpkins and gourds. Unlike the Kurum Pandum, it is a purely domestic ceremony with no public offerings, though the date for it is fixed for the whole village by the usual elders' meeting. It takes place in the first or second week of Kuar, i.e. in early October. Before dawn of the day before the festival the head of each family tries to get to his fields without being seen and reaps enough of the new rice for the morrow's ceremony, for which it is threshed, parched, husked and winnowed in readiness. *Landa* is prepared, and *mahua* spirit bought. On the appointed morning the new [769] rice is cooked in the Pot of the Departed by the housewife, along with the flesh of the goat, cock or pig sacrificed to the Departed by the head of each family, and eaten by the men and women of the family (affines being excluded) in the way already described for the domestic ceremony of the Kurum Pandum. All take *landa* and liquor, and then in most villages the men don their dancing head-dresses, and sing and dance from house to house, exchanging visits and drinking *landa* with all their neighbours. There are the usual remains-eating feasts given next day for brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from other villages, with more singing and dancing.

The Nuka Nordana Pandum

The literal meaning of '*nuka nordana*' is 'husked-grain (*indice, chawal*) grinding'. The festival is not universal among the Bison-horn Marias, and is held at about the beginning of the third week of Kartik month (November). It is sometimes spoken of as Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights; but no Maria houses are illuminated for it. Other local names are Pit Phorni (Halbi) and Deuthni. The ceremony should be held before the clan-god or log-god, but in villages where there is none it takes place in the *kadri-bera* by the usual Bhimul post, and, as for the Marka Pandum,

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name 796
of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *perma* sacrifices cocks and
a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kutki* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to
be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature [769
of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the
Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning 852]
suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether
new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the [184]
festival has been held it is *malo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. 796
I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring
a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes 778
place by the Bhimul post in the *hadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *perma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men
and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night [535]
the village women dance, led by the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in 796
all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

The Mandai

796 Jatra, which is held generally about the full moon of Magh, but in some villages is part of the round of festivities and hunting connected with the Wijja Pandum in the month of Chait. The Mandai is a Hinduization of the old Pen-karsita. Throughout Northern Bastar a Mandai Jatra is held at all big centres at about this time, culminating in the great Mandai in the open space called Kodo Bhata in Jagdalpur, which the Chief should attend in state, processing on elephant seven times round the fair, accompanied by innumerable mediums leaping and dancing possessed by their gods. The Hill Maria counterpart is the Koqsar on the day after the Pupal Korta Tindana. The Bison-horn Pen-karsita tends to resemble the Mandai of the bigger villages of the north, all the local gods being brought out and the *wadde* mediums, possessed by their godlings, leaping and dancing wildly about. The special Pen-karsita drum rhythm and dance have already been referred to.

Conclusion

These are the main festivals, though here and there there are further *pandum*, such as the sacrifice offered at the base of the first toddy-palm to be tapped among the southern Bison-horn Marias. Nor must it be expected that in every *pargana* or village the local *pandum* will conform exactly to the descriptions in this chapter, which represent the principal features of *pandum* actually seen in Dugeli, villages around Kuakonda, Aranpur, Ghotpal and villages in Sukma zamindari. The festivals are far more numerous and more elaborate than those of the Hill
796 Marias. It is an obvious suggestion that if the Bison-horn Maria tradition of migration from the Abujhmar hills be correct, the
177 accretions to the hill cults represent entirely the influence of the old Telanga Hindu centres of Dantewara, Barsur and Bhairamgarh. But this does not account for such features as the soaking of the first seeds to be sown in the coming harvest in the blood of the animals sacrificed in the Wijja Pandum, or the burial of the blood-stained *saja* leaves in the fields during the Kurum Pandum, which have suggestions of connexion with the Khond Meriah ritual; or for such magico-religious pieces of ritual as the gathering of *mahua* leaves in the baskets used for collecting *mahua* flowers, the dancing of the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head, or the spilling of milk on the *mahua* buds. Primitive cults are influenced by Hinduism, but also react on it; and it seems to have been part of the policy of the Bastar Chiefs to identify themselves as much as they could with the religious life of their primitive subjects, save those in the inaccessible Abujhmar hills. Much of the long Dasehra ritual at Jagdalpur is elaborated from primitive ideas. Tribal gods have been recognized, and many are allowed to join in the Mandai

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several 796
of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies
of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison- 177
horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, 241
kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the
police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan 789
woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had 196
the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly
in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. 609
The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending
information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted
to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost
of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished
the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to
keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile
the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even
a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The
Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling
to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum
I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days'
time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present.
On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say
that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's
wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady
had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country
for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal
Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the
Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole 585
chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted
and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge
of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening,
I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two
thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore
married and unmarried women collected and began to dance
with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely
covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots 585
of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of 535
onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village.
This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly
elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced
from house to house, men and women would come out and put a [431]
ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace
her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping
her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the 585
people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the 533
bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been
going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister. 585

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. 585
The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother 535
brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time. [789]

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. 796 ●
Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India. 609

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine. 796

● 796 Next morning large parties of Marias and Murias came from every
direction, some of the Murias from the Mardapal Pargana and the
villages round Chhota Dongar. A little rain fell and there was a
lot of blowing of horns. At midday the Anga and other symbols
of the gods were taken down to a stream for a bathe and during
the afternoon many Sirahas fell into trance and postured and danced
in ecstasy. A little shrine was set up in the middle of the clearing
and as more and more people arrived and other gods came to visit
Usendi Pen, the Sirahas danced wildly round and round it. A
procession was formed, the Anga leading it, with tall poles decorated
with peacocks' feathers following, and a crowd of children carrying
[534] gongs and various substitutes for gongs—bits of painted wood,
the lids of old kerosene oil tins, anything that could be banged to
make a noise.

Gradually the place filled up and by four o'clock there were three or four thousand people present—a small attendance, I was told. The Marias and Murias showed little interest in the shops which were mostly attended by local Hindus and officials, and there was very little drinking, though many a boy brought a gourd or a bottle of rice-beer or palm wine hanging under his arm. Then the dancing began, and hundreds of boys and girls in the full Hill Maria dancing attire (though no Hill Marias were present) and carrying decorated sticks and axes over their shoulders, formed lines and processions and great circles, until the entire ground was alive with slowly circulating movement.

As evening fell little fires sprang up under every tree where groups of people made their camps. The older people drank, cooked and gossiped with their relatives. Like all bazaars the Marhai is a great occasion for repairing friendships. During the night the boys and girls continued dancing, and from time to time the Sirahas brought out the Anga-gods and danced with them.

The moon rose at midnight and turned the scene into one of extraordinary majesty and beauty. The festival was decorous and restrained, but very happy. There was no orgy and practically no drunkenness. At dawn the dancing stopped and in a few minutes the whole great assembly melted away back into the forest.

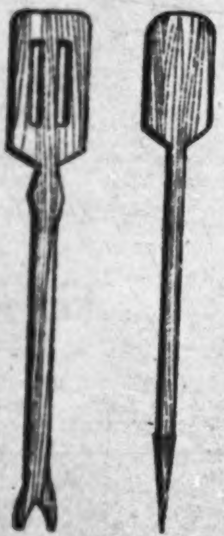
IX

On page 281 Grigson refers briefly to the Bison-horn Maria
164 custom of erecting carved wooden pillars in memory of well-known
or wealthy tribal leaders. There are not many of these pillars,
though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the
expense is great and only the most important people are considered
worthy of them.

241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

[796] [787] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.



417 FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking *Length 2' 9"*

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *hikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kutki* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilized areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gannao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bāri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 196

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

241 *Dhusir jāhi wāyhom sāngo*	We will come to press the grain into the bin.
539 *Miya wāy wāy jāhtorom sāngo.*	Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 196 It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January ..	Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.
February ..	Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.
March ..	Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.
April ..	Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.
May ..	Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.
June ..	Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.
July ..	Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.
August ..	Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.
September	Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.
October ..	Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dasera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

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196

the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, thrashing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

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At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parka*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

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In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *engrām*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats. 224 [411]

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle— 'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hāyna mānjhi*). [524]

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachār*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set 223
in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it. 224 223 [411]

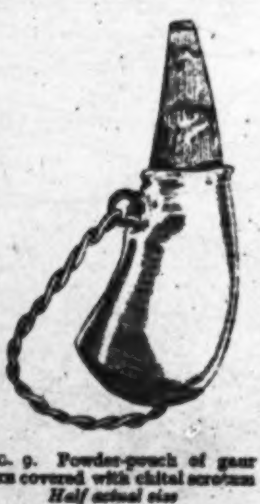

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

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While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

[782] At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khanna Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to [789] provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. [534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

● [796] Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

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[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 250 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 95; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 78 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); Ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhima in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimador who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

776 Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

776 796 Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

776 [513 857] In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. THE CLAN-GOD

614 776 We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

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[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

Plate XL

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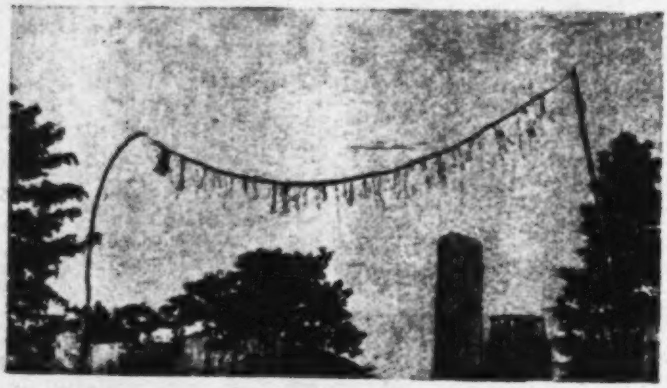

Grain strung across ghotul gate at Ulera

Muria camp, with village flags, during the Dassera festival

[p. 196 (B)]

346 New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a *hakum* hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

883 This description‡ is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. ●196 The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

346 In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given [831] birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo pole and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Anga Deo at Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small earthen pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiwa* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Anga Deo, Baiha the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Danteshwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

‡[Description of temple buildings see pp. 196-198, cat. 116—Analyst]

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Bathing the gods at Adner

Plate XLII

Bathing the gods at Masora

[p. 204 (B)]

Plate XLIV

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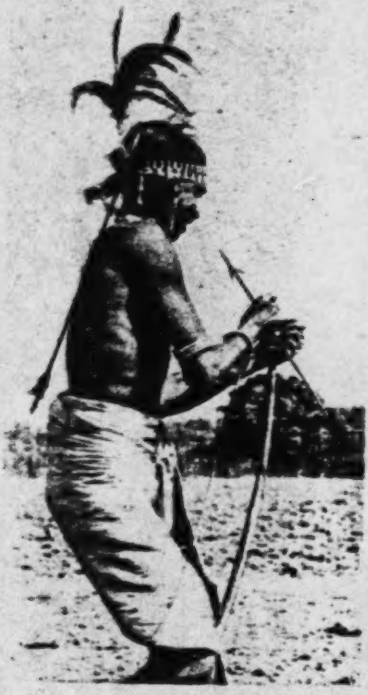


The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Almer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt

[p. 208 (B)]

527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

[411]

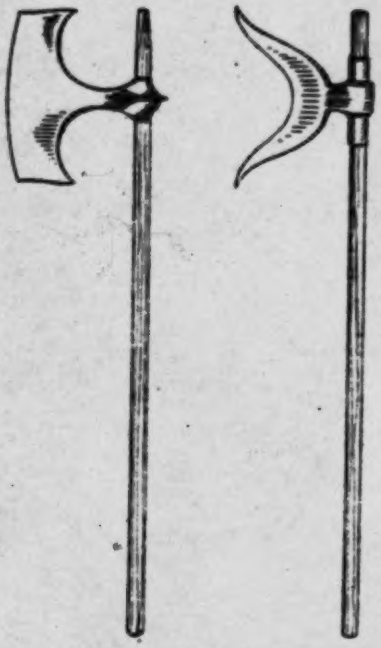


FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder.

But I was able to see it at Almer a few days later on 23 April. This hunt is 796 mainly the business of the chelik directed by the Kaser-Gaita, but other and more experienced hunters join in, for success in the hunt is the best of omens, not only for a plentiful supply of wild fruit but later for a fine harvest. A crowd therefore of chelik and older men led by the Kaser-Gaita with their axes and bows and arrows, some with gourds of gruel to refresh them on the way, gathered on the path leading towards the jungle.

The Gaita laid his own bow and arrows and axe together with a chelik's bow and arrows and axe across the path. He made a small doll out of dub grass and a grass bow and arrow and placed these in front. He made three piles of earth and on each of these placed a ring of aonra leaf and a branch of tendu. He made fire with a fire-drill (not a saw) and lit a little incense [372] which he offered to Tallur Muttai the Earth Mother, Mundri Dokari the wife of Budha Deo, and the Departed, crying to the earth to give good hunting. He waved the fire over the arrows, pressed his right hand hard on the ground, then carried away the grass doll and bow and arrow towards the village and threw them to the side of the path. At the same time the ghotul Sirdar picked up the bows and arrows and axes with a cry of triumph, crossed the line and went quickly down the path without looking back.

That day in Almer they got nothing, but the following evening, in Bandopal, the chelik returned with a jungle-fowl and a young chital. As they cut the chital up, they removed the tip of the ears, the tongue, the hoofs and liver; these bits were done up in three leaf-packets and cooked separately. The Kaser-Gaita took these packets and offered them to the local gods; a little was left over and put aside for himself. The flesh was cooked where it was cut up—in the fields outside the village—and a little wrapped up in leaves was given to every household.

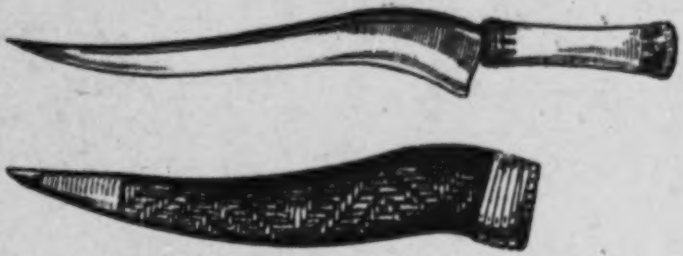
We now return to Masora for the Marka Pandum. The different clans in this village kept the festival in different places, each with their own clan-gods; I went with the Poyami people and their Anga Deo to a sacred grove [778] near a small stream in the jungle about a mile from the village. Here we found the gods—the Anga Deo whose name was Lal Sai, the Gutal pole called Lalu, and the tall flag-staff and flag of white cloth, with sun and moon and nine little men worked on it in red which represents Budha Deo—placed in position under a saja tree. A brass horse for the Rau was under another tree, and a broken sword and shield for ancestors who had died in battle long ago.

Not far from the gods the chelik had cleared and cow-dunged a patch of ground and were busy cooking rice and kosra. There were baskets of mangoes, char and karmata fruit ready for the pot. In front of the gods also 'these three sisters, mango, char and karmata', had been placed.

Presently three of the chelik took their hunting-horns and blew them as a sign that the proceedings were to start. The mediums obtained leave to begin and the gods were taken up and carried to the stream. There the Gaita first offered eggs, liquor and aonra rings to the Water Maidens and took the gods down into the stream and washed them thoroughly. The Gaita crossed the stream and offered eggs and rings and liquor to the Forest Maidens for the safety of the cattle that might graze there.

After the bathing the gods were brought back and anointed with mahua oil. Then two of the Siraha-mediums sat in trance before the gods and discussed with them in a curiously intimate and homely way what offerings were to be made and what the gods would do in return. The clan-priest took chickens that were brought for every Poyami household and two pigs and persuaded them to eat a little of the rice that was piled in small heaps before the gods.

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.



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[531]

FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 782 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

sat and ate, and returned home for an all-night dance by the chelik and motiari. 796

During a festival the Muria sing to a large variety of tunes, of which Walter Kaufmann recorded a number of samples: 796
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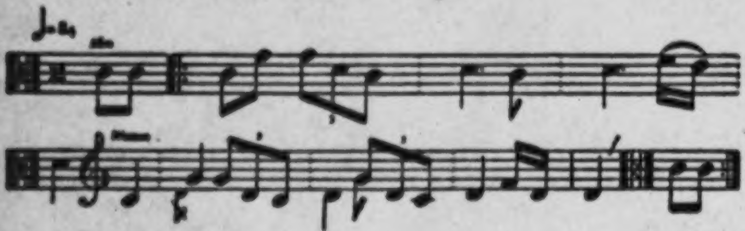

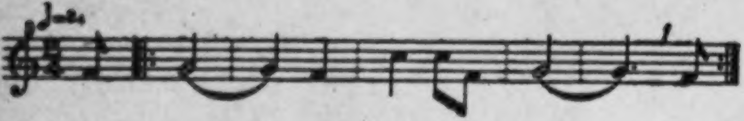

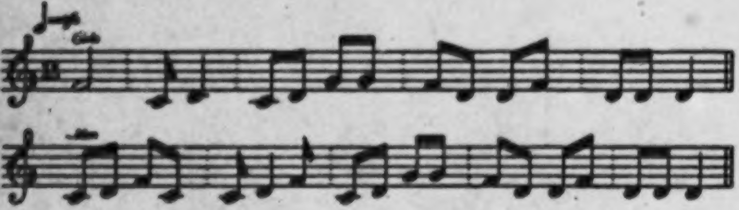

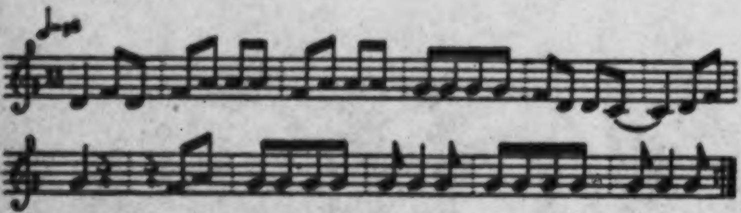

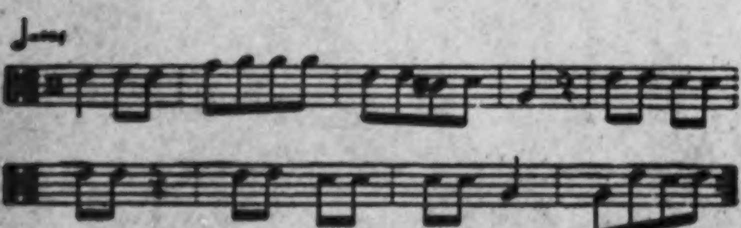

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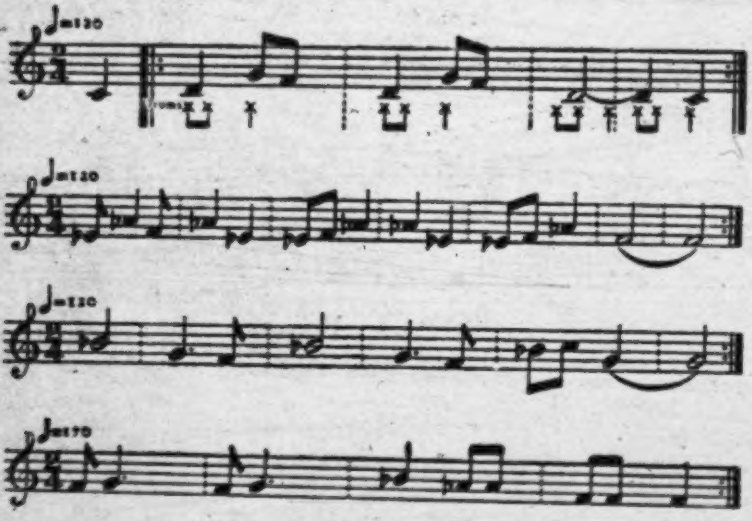

XI. PURIFYING THE VILLAGE

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Throughout the year ceremonies, called in Halbi *bohorani*, are performed to purify the villages of disease and evil. Old brooms and baskets are collected and carried to the village boundary, and a scapegoat may be consecrated and sent away into the jungle.

Such ceremonies are performed before the Wijja Pandum in May, when the nearest stream or river first comes down in flood in July or August, before the Puna Pandum in September and before the Jata or Pupul Pandum in January. If necessary, it may be repeated before the Marka Pandum. All the year round, in fact, these protective ceremonies continue; apparently they cannot confer permanent immunity.

I will give a detailed description of one of these purificatory rites, the Nartate Kiyana for the purification and protection of Bandopal, which I witnessed on 25 April 1941. We were woken at dawn by the blowing of hunting-horns, at the sound of which the village assembled. The people went first to the shrine of the Village Mother and offered incense there; the mediums took Kuari, Marin Dokari and Hoche Muria, each represented by a bundle of date-palm leaves, out of the shrine. Others carried gourds, aonra rings, iron slag, parched gram, wheat cakes, eggs, chickens, the root of a date-palm, a pig, rice and liquor.

A long procession went round the village boundaries. At every point where a path went out of the village, the Gaita put three bits of iron slag, hammered them into the ground, and touched the place with the palm root. This, by a pleasant fiction, represented the sacrifice of a pig. At the four points of the compass he offered eggs to the Rau or demon of the forest. As they went round the boundaries, the mediums caught the ghosts and spirits of the surrounding jungle—the Bhut and Mirchuk—on the trees with palm leaves and popped them into a gourd which they then shut with a leaf-cup.

At last the party found a suitable ant-hill, and made seven piles of rice before it, which the Gaita forced the chickens to eat. When their eating had signified 796 that the god had accepted the offering, he killed them. He presented the root representing a pig, two eggs, parched gram and wheat cakes, and buried the 783 gourd full of little demons and the leaves with which they had been caught in the hole of the ant-hill. This isolated and destroyed the evils threatening the village, and closed it with a magic wall against hostile sorcerers.

Later in the morning a Muria, followed by a Muria-Lohar carrying a basket, went with his hammer and some iron slag round the village. He put three 'nails' in every doorway, and each householder gave him two pice worth of mahua flowers for his services.

Such is the Muria method (which has many points of resemblance to Baiga and Pardhan custom) of closing the magic boundaries of a village, and removing its supernatural dangers.

XII. The Birth of a God

On 31 March 1941 there was a very special occasion at Adnar village. The 796 Pupal Korta Tindana was to be celebrated with the delight and pomp which this festival always excites. But an even more important event was the birth of a young god, so young that he had not yet been even named, but was now to be called Chelik Sai.

During the whole of 1940 the people of Adnar had suffered constantly from fever and other diseases. When the Siraha were consulted, the Adnar gods spoke through them saying that a new god had been born and was angry that he was receiving no worship. They were told to go to Bargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana where they would hear from the god Doko Mudial what they must do. The Kaser-Gaita and the people of Adnar therefore went to visit the Kaser-Gaita of Bargaon. He brought Doko Mudial out of his shrine, and the local mediums asked what was to be done. The god replied that a younger brother of his own had been born, the father being Maria Dokara who lives in the Abujhmar, a god of the Kuhrami clan. He said that the people of Adnar must make the god at once and honour him with a *Poroy-tasna* (name-giving) festival. Doko Mudial, who is an Anga, was then carried out into the jungle on the shoulders of two mediums and he showed where the bamboo for making his younger brother was to be cut. The Gaita of Bargaon offered eggs and liquor to the tree and cut it with a single blow of his axe. He handed it over to the Gaita of Adnar, who took it home.

On the morning of the festival day two members of the Naitami clan, which stands in the *akomama* relation to the Kuhrami, took the bamboo into the jungle near the Adnar temples and made the new god. They offered eggs and liquor, spun some cord on a takli, and prepared a large bunch of peacock feathers with a special arrow made of virgin iron. There was also a new knife of virgin iron provided by the Muria-Lohar of Rengagondi. Others erected a pole of saja wood and placed a flat stone before it in front of the new temple—a simple open shed—which had been built for the young god. When all was ready the Kaser-Gaita brought the new god and placed him against the pole in front of his house.

Adnar is a *pen-rawar* of no fewer than three separate clans, the Naitami, Kuhrami and Kawasi. Outside the village, about a quarter of a mile from the river, in the forest is a group of seven temples, each a thatched open shed, with the usual flat stone, cooking apparatus and the god slung high against the roof. Before each temple were poles or frames against which the gods

716 could be rested, and flat stones for sacrifice. In one temple is Visir Mark, son of Kati Dokari, clan-god of the Kuhrami; in another is Udum Kuar, his *akomáma*, clan-god of the Naitami; in a third is Soma Dokara, clan-god of the Kawasi, and *akomáma* to Visir Mark. On this occasion there was a fourth Anga present, the elder brother of the young Chelik Sai, Doko Mudial, who had been brought from Bargaon.

In the other temples were long Gutal poles, each with its bundle of feathers at the top—Kati Dokari (Kuhrami), Samrat Dokara (Naitami), Desh Matra (Naitami), Bhale Dokari (Kawasi). Samrat had his wife with him—Iyadai, represented by a very long pole. Outside the group of temples was a separate shrine for Budhi Matal represented by a closed litter. Such were the gods, and when I arrived on the early morning of 31 March they were being brought out of their temples while chelik gathered with large dhol drums. Visitors came from the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka parganas, but only the Bargaon people brought their gods. A hut of leaves was erected for those visitors who did not belong to the three clans, and from this hut also the husbands of women in their periods and pregnant women could get their food. But I was told that the husbands and mothers of newly delivered babies got nothing at all before the umbilical stump had fallen.

The proceedings opened with some vigorous drumming on the dhol drums, and several mediums fell into their customary trance and asked the gods for permission to begin the festival. When the gods had declared that everything was in order, the Kaser-Gaita of Adnar, a tall lanky man wearing a woman's coloured jacket adorned with cowrie shells, danced round the temples telling every god to get ready.

Then a long procession started for the river. Each god was taken on the shoulders of a member of its own clan and carried through the jungle. As we went, we reached a place where a Rau, or demon of the forest, lived, and rice was offered to him. A little later we came to Bhimul Pen in the shape of a round stone—he was given a brass ring; at the river-bank rice was offered to the Yer Kanyang. Then the priests of every clan offered egg-shells and kosra to the gods, and after that they were thrown into the river for a bath. They were thoroughly washed, and most of their worshippers also took the opportunity of a refreshing plunge. After the gods had been carried back dripping and bedraggled, they were anointed with sesamum oil (for this was also the Til Tindana, the first use of the fresh oil).

The rest of the day was occupied with three chief activities. The gods themselves, borne on the shoulders of their mediums, played and danced before their temples. The clan-priests, helped by the chelik, busied themselves in cooking a large feast, in which the new oil and pulses were freely used. Women gathered and the motiari brought piles of leaves and sat in the shade of trees making them into plates and cups. Mediums stood before their deities asking questions and delivering oracles to any who came with private troubles. After the midday meal which the members, both men and women, of each clan ate separately, the usual offerings of chickens and pigs were made to the different gods.

At about four o'clock there was a concentration of mediums round the new god Chelik Sai, and it became known that he had asked for the sacrifice of a young bull (it is only at a funeral that a bullock is used). A party of mediums went for it and it was presently brought in slung to a pole carried by two strong chelik. It was laid before Chelik Sai and blindfolded. Everyone gathered round, the motiari specially pushing to the front. The bull's ribs were touched with the end of the god's Gutal pole. Then with an axe, the clan-priest of the Kuhrami struck the throat of the animal and killed it with a single blow. The Gaita of every god pressed forward with hands outstretched, 796

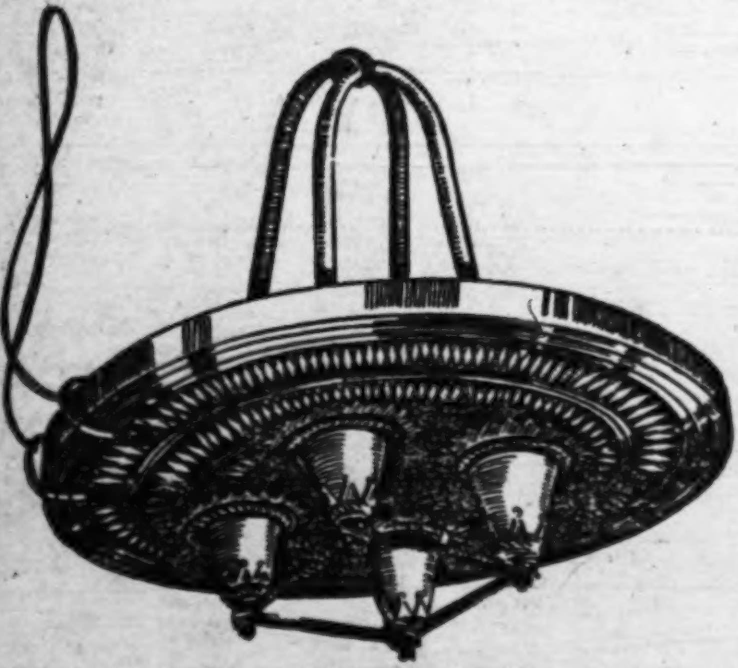

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FIG. 33. Dancing-shield used by chelik during the festivals of the clan-gods

crying to the bull to have pity on them and not to be angry, then dipped their hands in the blood and carried it to offer to their own deities. The clan-priest of the Kuhrami made an incision in the bull's side and removed part of the liver and offered it to Chelik Sai. After this they carried the carcass away into the jungle and cut it up.

For the evening meal, the meat was boiled in a score of pots, and rice mixed with sesamum oil, urad pulse and some green vegetables was cooked for each clan separately by the clan-priests in their respective temples.

As evening fell, the chelik and motiari, gorgeous in their festival attire, came from Bargaon and Taragaon, Atargaon and Esalnar, Kajen and Kongera, from Chalka, Temrugaon and Chimri. Each party made a little camp under the trees, lit a fire and cooked some food. About ten o'clock they began to dance, pargana by pargana, in huge circles lit by the light of torches. The gods were brought and placed in the middle of the dancing-field. All night the boys and girls danced and at dawn the gods awoke and danced and postured. About seven o'clock the visitors went away and the gods were taken home. Chelik Sai, who after all is a chelik, danced with the motiari;

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he could not keep away from motiari; he chased them round and round the
•796 field. A Siraha-medium collected a brass ring from every woman present
to offer to the gods; this may have been a token of compensation for the
presence of women at the festival, for in strict Muria tradition no woman
should have been there.

XIII. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the theological and ceremonial aspects of Muria
771 religion. This is far from being the whole story, for religion is for the Muria
a very wide thing, consecrating every aspect of life, inspiring a comprehensive
182 ethical system and linking gods and men, living and dead into a single family
that even the intrusion of death cannot destroy.

Muria religion is not unlike that of other tribes—Bison-horn Maria, Raja Muria, Halba, Bhattra—in Bastar (though it has an advantage of the others in possessing a noble hero-god whose example is an inspiration), but it is very different from that of its neighbours. Its elaborate, rich and picturesque character is in striking contrast to the drab and languid faith of the Central Provinces Gond. The tribes of western Orissa near the Bastar border—Kond, Bondo, Gadaba—fully endowed as to personal culture, have a less developed and satisfying religion. The rites of the Maria of the Abujhmar and Chanda are stark and austere beside those of the Muria.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect, far different from the Puritan destructiveness of its influence to the north. So long as the tribe and its institutions hold together, so long as they remain free from external interference, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations. Otherwise, I fear, now that the peak is reached, change will only bring decline.

Muria religion today is not without dignity and power. It has its distortions and abuses—many have been noted in the present chapter—but we must not confound the corruptions of a religion with religion itself. Even its superstitions may have their value. George Tyrrell once suggested that the superstitions of Catholicism provided 'harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid'.

Religion must fulfil and answer human needs. There is hardly a greater need among aboriginals than freedom from fear, and Muria ceremonial by aiming at the placation of god and ghost (the ultimate source of all fears) brings the great gift of solace. The desire for continuity is met by the elaborate funerary rites which bring the Departed home. The marriage ceremonial consecrates the Muria's passionate interest in the family. The fundamental longing for tribal unity and solidarity is expressed and strengthened by the great festivals when many villages dance together, share a common meal and unite in the worship of the gods. The gods intermarry and are related just as men are.

To the Muria, is God the rewarder of them that seek him? There is little that can be called love in the Muria's attitude to any of his gods. But there is gratitude often and sometimes a belief that a god takes a special interest in a man, furthers his cause and goes about with him. There is pride too; a powerful and important clan-god is a source of credit to a village, a fine litter of Danteshwari awakes feelings of patriotic delight. But generally the gods are feared; like the Departed they are dangerous and must be kept in their place. There is many a god who is never noticed except when he makes a nuisance of himself.

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Plate XLVI

Siraha prophesying above
the dedicated bull

Plate XLVII

796 ●
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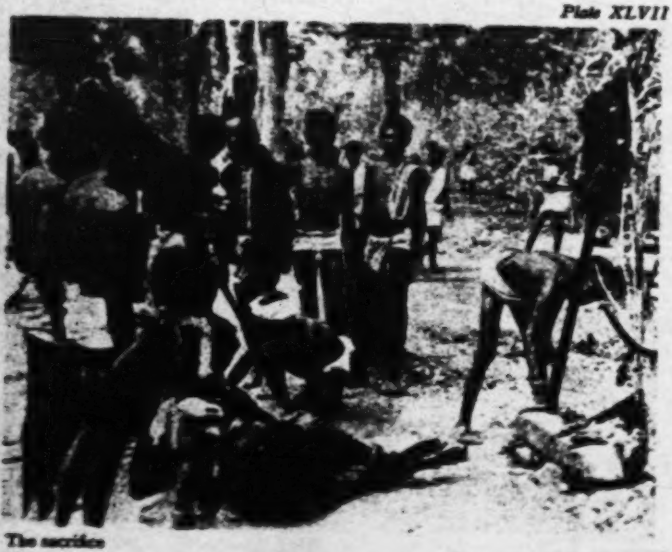
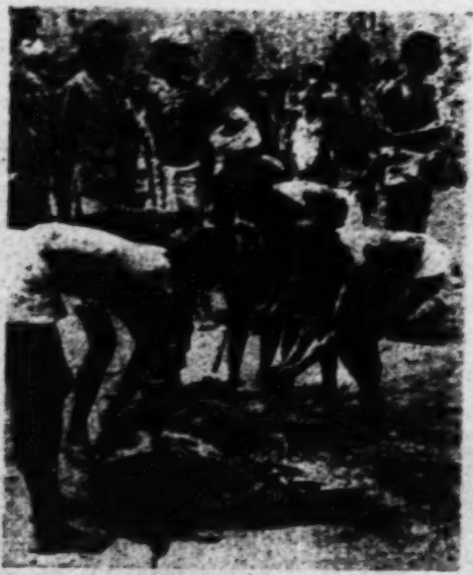


The sacrifice



Priests of other deities fill their hands with blood

[p.224(c)]

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

116 194 118 In the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

118 194 In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Netturgundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

194 ●196 118 Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

113 Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1] 838

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[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Muria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 478.

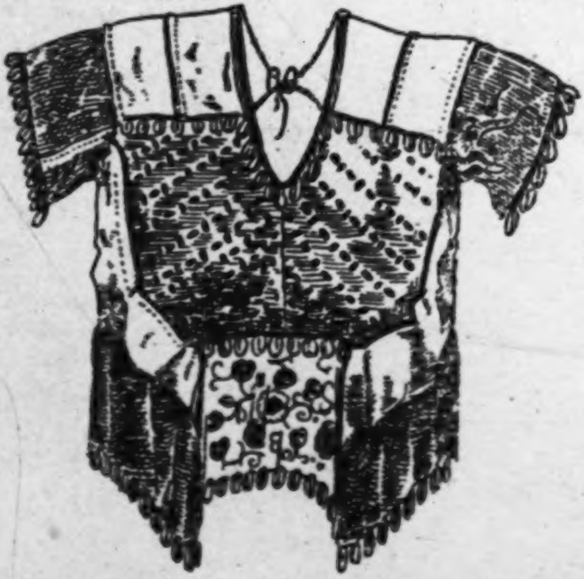

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FIG. 115. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes 838
put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in 787
trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-
festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a 292
state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured
and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar 838
put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men.
Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at 196 ●
the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which pre-
cedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, 292
and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a
ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual
harvest.[2]

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[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 3ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandoga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching as on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

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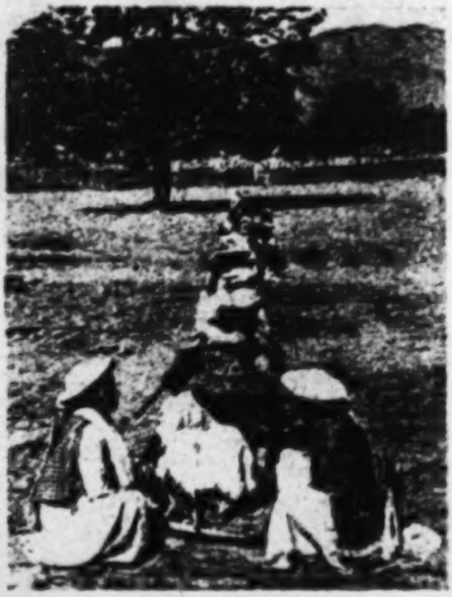
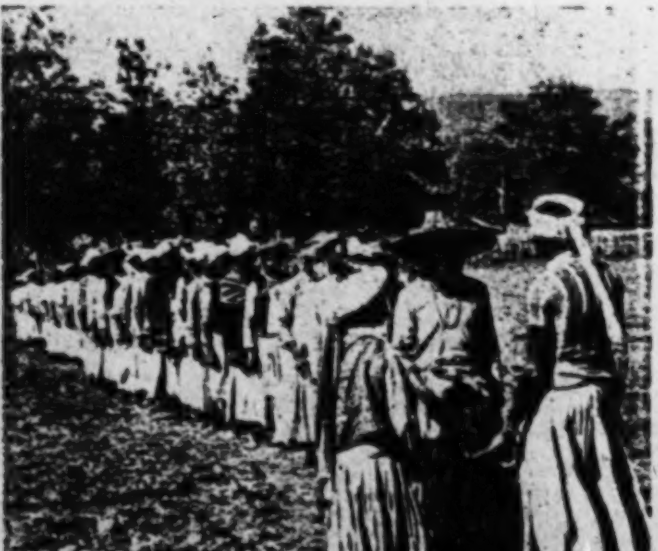
Plate XC





Pus Kolang dances: two movements in the Lingo Pata at Phulpar

[p. 464 (B)]

Plate XCII

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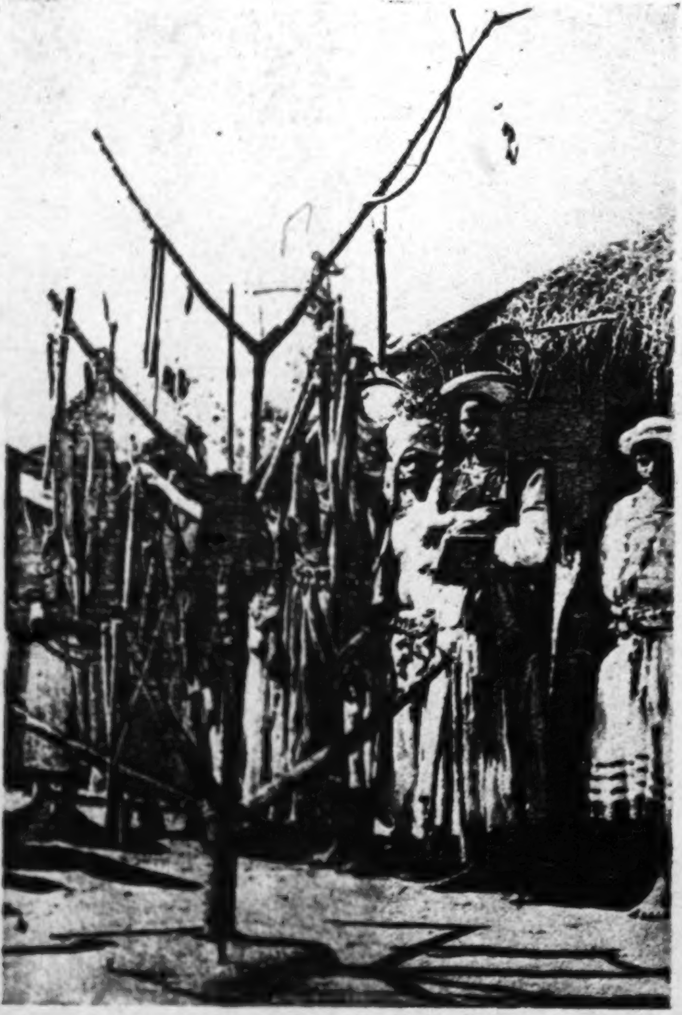

The semur tree at Phulpar, hung with dancing sticks

[p. 480(B)]

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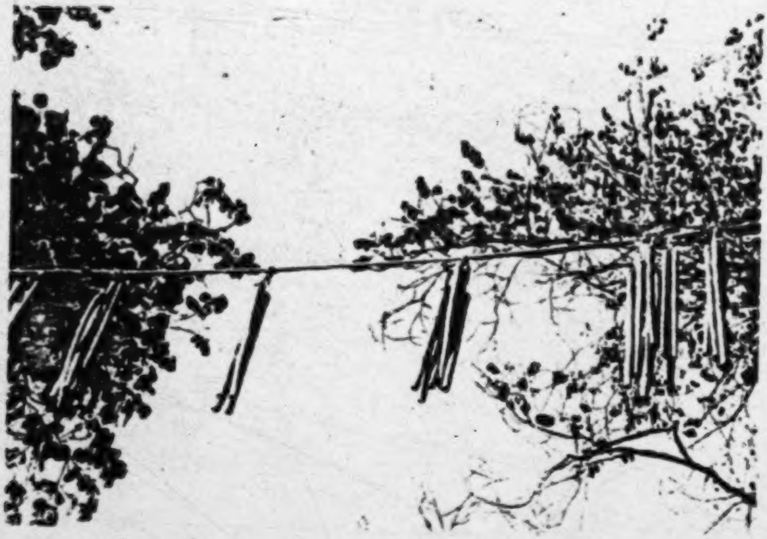
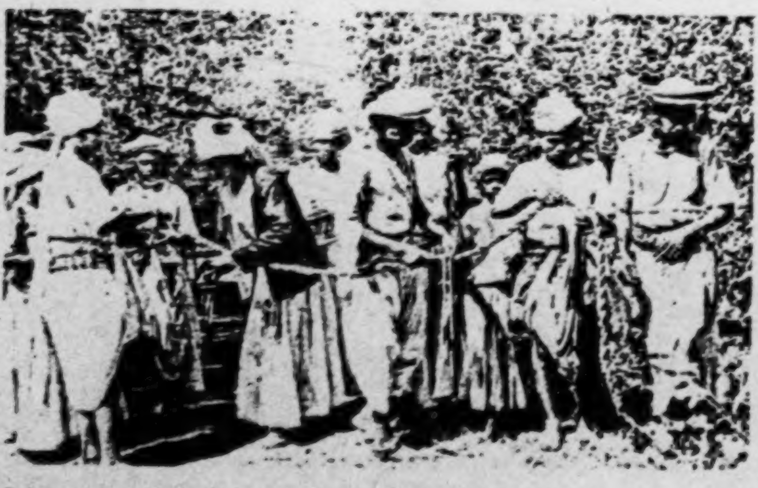


Dancing sticks strung across the road near
the village boundary at Kodibera



Chelik preparing to hoist their
sticks across the road

[p.484 (A)]

Plate XCIII

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Plate XCIV

Chait Dandar dances: two movements in the Stick Dance at Malakot

CHAPTER NINETEEN

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

I

x 883 x 484 527 796

DELIGHTFUL and enlivening features of ghotul life are the expeditions which are made throughout the year to other villages.[1] I will consider here only those visits which are made by the ghotul officially, under the command of the leaders and with appropriate discipline and rules. Such expeditions are made for marriages, for the festivals of the clan-gods and the Marhai fairs, and—in the cold weather—for ceremonial dancing from village to village. Sometimes the chelik and motiari go together, sometimes separately. Although every trip has a definite and serious purpose it is transformed by the spirit of youth and love into a holiday adventure. Now girls and boys of different villages meet one another and fall in love; now chelik and motiari can go out together on the freest and happiest of picnics far away from the drudgery of everyday life.

Every marriage attracts the neighbouring ghotul; early in the morning of the marriage day the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages are up, decorating themselves, preparing their drums, collecting their few necessities. When they reach their destination, they camp under trees or by a stream. They go to the wedding to help in the making of the booth, to dance before the house and above all to share in the splendid display of the Lagir. They are entertained by the bridegroom's family; they get their food and some liquor. For the rest they roam about together, playing, laughing, flirting or talking and resting in their little outdoor camps. Marriages usually occur in the warm weather and provide a perfect picnic-holiday for everyone.

The great festivals of the clan-gods provide another opportunity for amorous adventure or recreation. The Muria mind does not confuse piety with religion. The gods are to be satisfied and honoured; they must be bathed, fed, humoured, coaxed, caressed; but there is no reason why their worshippers should not enjoy themselves. The Canterbury Pilgrims would have been quite at home at a clan-festival. I have witnessed these at Adnar and Metawand. Hundreds of boys and girls attend them—a magnificent sight with their finery and ornaments. Here again, each ghotul makes a separate camp under trees, but the chelik and motiari dance together and there is more mixing with other villages than in a marriage.

Many a boy arrives with a bottle of mahua liquor half hidden beneath his arm. He has come with a definite purpose of meeting and attracting a girl from another village. At night he may be seen with a torch searching everywhere for his sweetheart. Even married men are allowed licence on these occasions. The gods themselves, carried about by mediumistic Siraha, assault the girls and chase them about. The festal dancing begins about nine o'clock in the evening and goes on till dawn; it is a splendid and moving spectacle. All round are little camp fires, and as the night wears on more and more boys and girls slip away together into the jungle or retire to sit by the fire and drink their liquor.

x 883 x 484 796

There are finally the ceremonial expeditions, which we will now consider.

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[1] Similar expeditions are made by the Orissa tribes, the Bhuiya, Juang, Bondo and Gadaba, though these generally have a serious matrimonial purpose alien to Muria tradition.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. The Pus Kolang Expeditions

x883 x484 ●796 The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpar. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalla Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

x883 x484 796 787 On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

x883 x484 796 [292] During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gain and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog, and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang. 883x

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance. 484x 796 ●

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed. 883x 484x 796

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger. 787

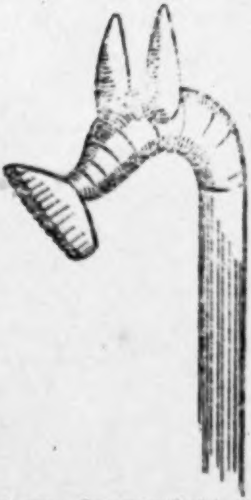

Fig. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

[293
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When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out. 883λ 484x 796

This was the custom in Phulpar and Kodlibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

x883 words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he
x484 handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes
●796 the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After
that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha
along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary,
the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of sonra
leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita
and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the
line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or
[791] supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately
react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until
the danger is discovered and removed.

x883 Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of
the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about
x484 his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual
attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed.
796 Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the
784 associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual
infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

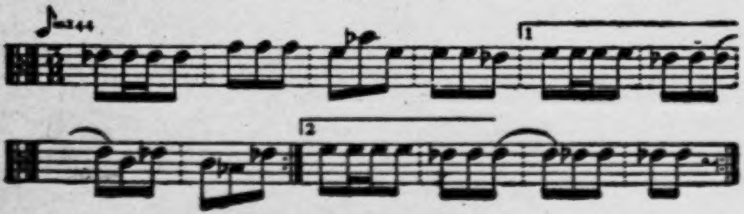
In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there
is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted
[778] from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other
hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but
their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to
see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village
visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and
must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little
camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the
need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, 883x
and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a 484x
mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and 796
the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it.
Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar 784
fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon 883x
and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's 484x
house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang, 796



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Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently 883x
as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two 484x
boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others 796
begin their programme of dances. 535

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[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 95.

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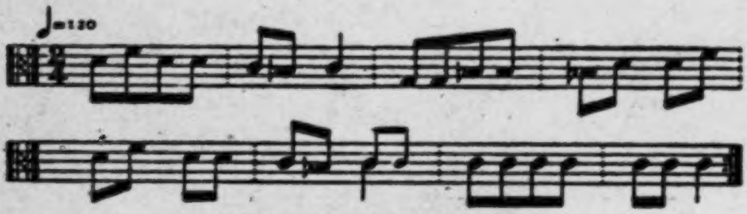
There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.

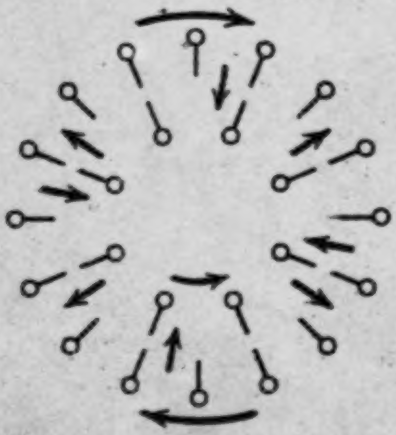
[533]



[539]

Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!
After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!
After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonkuari Pen, Phulkuari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balkuari Pen, Naturgundi Pen.



To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappa Daka. *Kappa* is a bird and *daka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

883x
484x
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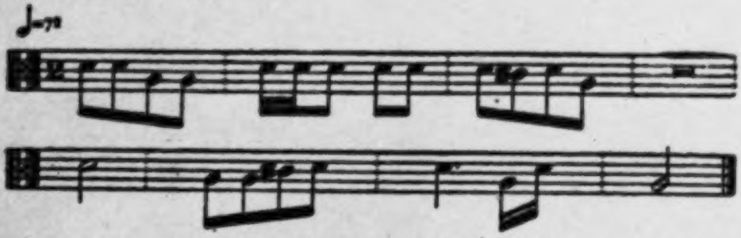
of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.



[533]

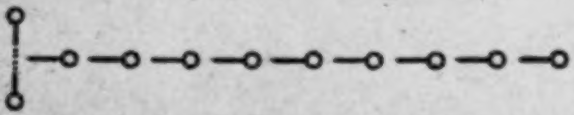
[539]

In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Endanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelhar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Pupgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Monkey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

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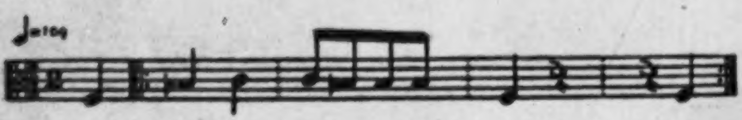
their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1

[533]


Re reloyo re rela re rela rela re reloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.
[539] At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *manda-pite* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Koilibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

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[771] [1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

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Plate XCV

The Watia Karsana

A Chait Dandar
dancer

A straw man

[p. 492 (A)]

X 883
X 484
● 796
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[539]

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered

[293]

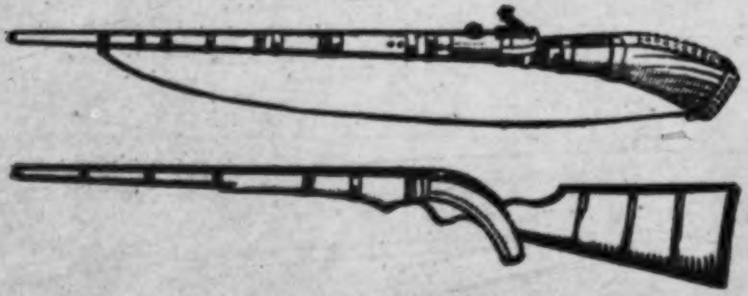

FIG. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

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[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 190ff.

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[293]

used to shelter beneath it when he was alive. Obviously there is a reference to Semurgaon, the village where Lingo is said to have turned into a stone and now has his shrine. The semur has the added advantage that its spikes frighten off magic and demons. A small semur, is chosen because a bigger one might be inhabited by the ghost of some dead chelik. The bare branches of the tree that suddenly blossom with bright red flowers may symbolize the menarche or nuptial fertility.

The semur must be cut very carefully. The motiari offer rice and pulse before it saying, 'As our boys went out well and happy, so well and happy may they return'. As the Gaita cuts it the girls stop it falling to the ground, for should it do so, it is believed that a pair of dancers will die on the way and not return.

They then tie a saja leaf round the stumps of the trees and carry them back either to the ghotul compound, or to an open space in the middle of the village, wherever the ashes of the fire by which the omens were originally tested are to be found. If the trees, after being planted, do not stand up straight it is believed that disaster is in store for the boys. The motiari make small mud platforms, whiten them with clay and sometimes decorate them with drawings of the chelik. These platforms are to be left for three years, though I doubt if this is often done, but it is important that at the end of the proceedings the semur trees should be pulled up. Should they sprout with renewed life it means that the Gain and his mate will die. In Ghotulbera this actually happened and now the trees are always pulled up and thrown away.

After the platforms have been made, the motiari prepare a lot of leaf-pipes, bundles of tobacco and toilet-twigs. Where there are two trees, one is for the leaders of the party, the Gain and Jokta, the other for the rest. This is an anxious and exciting day for the motiari; their chelik have been away amidst unknown dangers to the heart and spirit; they must do all they can to please them. This evening they cook in the ghotul or near the boys' camp in an enclosure of branches.

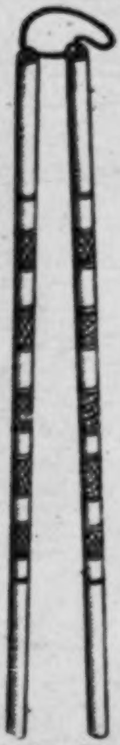


FIG. 119. Dancing-sticks from Remewand

When the boys reach home, they go first to the Gaita's house and dance there. They then proceed to the ghotul or to their camp, where they put the spear into the ground near the semur trees and dance round them. After a time they gather about the trees and suddenly all cry *Heere!* and hang their dancing-sticks on the branches. They remove their special clothes and hang these too on the branches. They take the pipes and tobacco from the trees and smoke them. The next morning they clean their teeth with the toilet-twigs which the motiari have provided. They are home again.

In Koilibera in 1941, the boys reached the village in the morning and spent the day dancing and collecting grain. In the evening, after they had danced round the semur trees, the Kaser-Gaita made little squares with coal-dust, rice-flour and haldi at the foot of each tree, and offered incense with the aid of the need-fire that the boys had now brought home. The chelik gathered round him and their leader offered him the sacred bunch of peacock's feathers and after exchanging this three times, the priest hung it on the first tree. Then the boys hung up their dancing-sticks and turbans. The rest of their attire was packed in little baskets and put under a tree.

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

883x
484x
796 ●
535

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all reassembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

[301]

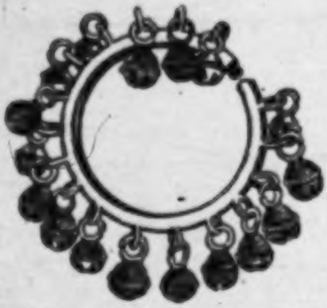


FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singar*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets. [869]

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingaal. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

III. The Pen Kolang Expeditions

x883
x484
•796
535

Between the ordinary Pus Kolang expedition and the Chait Dandar, which I will describe immediately, there is a sort of intermediate dance called the Pen or Deo Kolang. This is danced by boys only, but girls accompany them to do the cooking and keep an eye on them. Just as in the Pus Kolang, the chelik practise their dances, light a fire to test the omens and go to the shrine of the Village Mother to get fire and a spear or axe or bell. When this is done the Gaita buries a ring in front of the shrine.

The boys follow very much the same rules as are observed on the Pus Kolang expeditions and have to observe chastity even with the motiari of their own village. When they return they dance before the Gaita's house and he digs up the ring and returns it to their leader. At Esalnar they said that it was essential that the dancing party should make a complete circle of villages right round their own village. Every boy must dance for at least three years or the gods will be angry with him. At Esalnar, as also in villages south of Narayanpur such as Bakulwahi and Markabera, the dancing-sticks are not slung up across the road but are placed in the Deo-gudi.

The distinctive features then of the Pen Kolang are that girls accompany the party, that a ring is buried, and that the dancing-sticks are placed in the Deo-gudi at the end of the performance.

At Bakulwahi there was a rule that on the last day when the last dance was finished every boy had to throw his stick down at the same time, or they would fall ill.

IV. The Chait Dandar Expeditions

Throughout the east-central and south-eastern villages of the Muria territory the Chait Dandar, Kati Dandar or Mahua Dandar dances take the place of the Pus Kolang. I have already pointed out that as we move east and south from the Jhoria area the cult of Lingo grows progressively weaker and there is thus less inducement to perform the Pus Kolang, which is essentially a dance performed in his honour. The Chait Dandar is a much happier and freer dance than the Pus Kolang. It is not hedged about by a score of taboos and the dread sanctions that enforce them. The essential feature, indeed, of this dance is that boys and girls go out together and that there is no rule forbidding sexual intercourse between members of the same or of different ghotul.

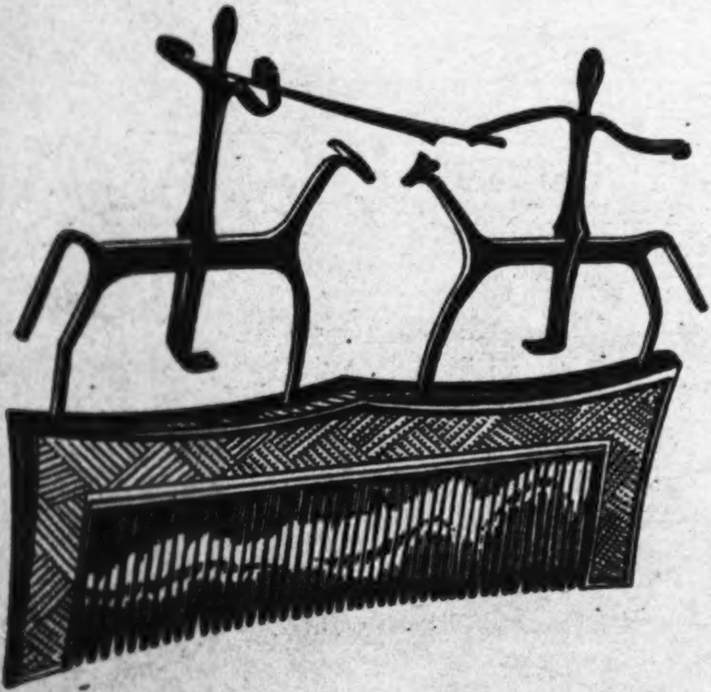
Apart from this the general procedure of the Chait Dandar is not unlike that of the Pus Kolang. Before the chelik and motiari start, they practise for many days in the ghotul—for here too mistakes are dangerous and have to be atoned for. When all is ready they first dance in the ghotul; they then go to the shrine of the Village Mother where they offer liquor to Tallur Muttal saying, 'O Mother Earth, we are but children, teach us to dance well, save us from mistakes'. Then in front of the Gaita's house they dance again and the Gaita digs a hole into which he puts a ring, planting a semur tree above it. In some villages he offers liquor here in the name of Bhimul Pen.

When the boys and girls set out, they cross over a line of sonra rings as usual and promise to give Mother Earth and the Departed offerings if they protect them from magic and evil spirits. In each village they go first to the Gaita and then collect mahua and food from every house. The visitors are entertained in the ghotul; sometimes they are made to dance at once and the ordinary procedure of the evening is omitted; sometimes, however, hosts and visitors interchange their girls for combing and massaging. I doubt if this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

883x
484x
796●
535

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.



[412
531]

FIG. 121. Comb with chelik and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dandār* or *kīkī* and are usually made of surtali wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

x883
x484
•796
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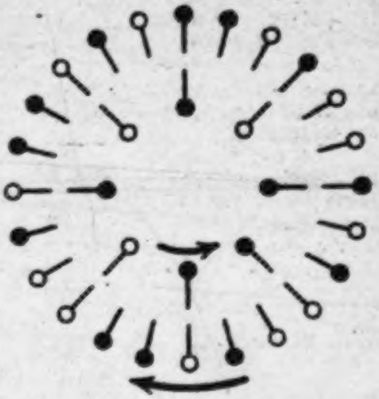
The dances and songs differ slightly from those of the Pus Kolang. In April 1941, I saw the Chait Dandar dancers of Jungani when they visited Malakot. The girls had no special dress, but the boys wore the dancing skirt, turbans and bells loosely hung above the buttocks. The leader of the party, the Gaita, wore the elaborate comb illustrated in Fig. 121 and a gaily coloured bag round his neck.



The dancing resembled the Pus Kolang dancing, but was much enlivened by the presence of the girls. The sticks used were much longer, about three feet with a notch at one end. In the big stick-dance with which they began the boys and girls mixed freely, forming two antagonistic circles. Each boy and girl held a stick in either hand, the right pointing upwards and the left down. As the circles revolved, they struck each other's sticks and passed on. They danced on their toes, with a light and easy step, right foot to right, left foot to left, the left foot up and down, then across to the right. The circles moved in both directions, reversing with a loud cry of *Ow-ha*. As usual among Muria, the boys shook their buttocks horizontally to ring the bells; this gave a very ragged effect in comparison with the strict timing and unison of the vertical jerk of the Hill Maria.

Songs

x883
x484
796
535
539

1

Hun hun hun hum jām kuy

The peacock has a long tail.
Where is the long-tailed peacock?
The peacock's in the Gaita's house.
How much does the peacock drink?
The peacock takes five sips.
Come down, O long-tailed peacock!
Where will it come down?
In the Pujari's house,
In his house come down.
O long-tailed peacock!

2

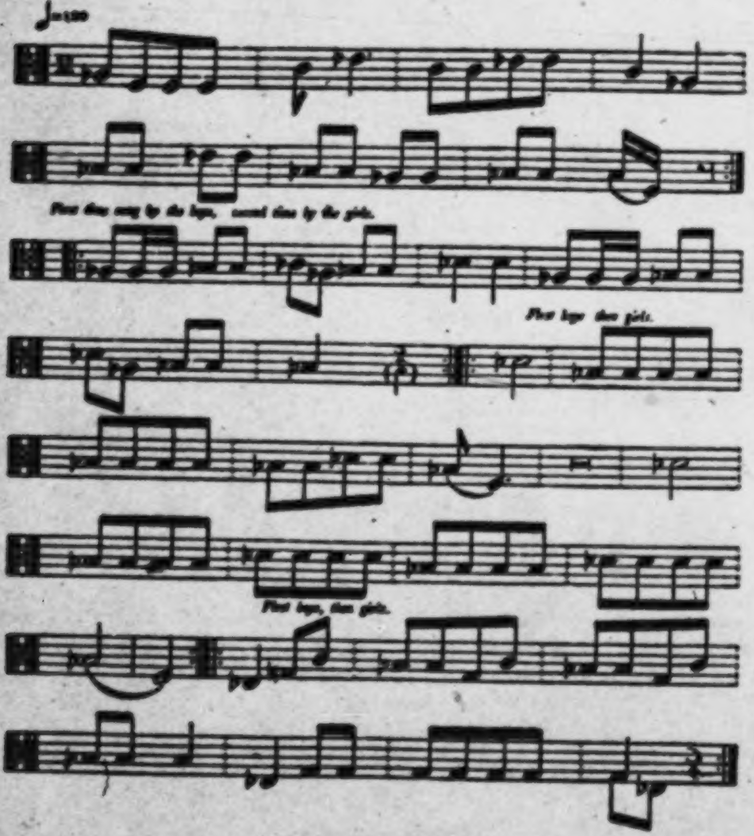
Roy wāyo jām kuy

Don't think about your lover, she won't come now.
You'll miss your step in the dance if you think of her.
You won't sing properly.
Where has the Pujari gone?
He has gone with a knife to sacrifice.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the
Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding
an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the
Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement
holding his stick.

883x
484x
796 ●
535
539

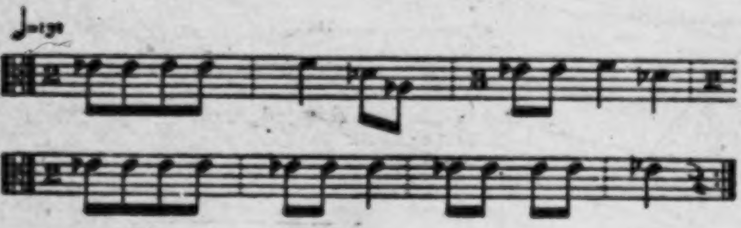

♩=120
First time sung by the boys, second time by the girls.
First boys then girls.
First boys, then girls.

883x
484x
796
535
533

The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

Song

x383
x484
●796
535
[533]



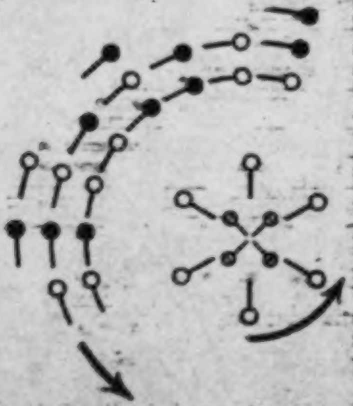
Tari nāna na nāre nāna tari nānāre

[539]

Oho maina ho lālsai baitho danda ho.	O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.
Oho kāken ke danda ho lālsai maina kāken ke danda ho tari?	What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?
Ye bāte paltu ho rāja maina ho lālsai ye bāte paltu ho!	Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!
O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho lālsai ho teri.	This is the Chait Dandar.
Uthen dakhu ho rāja maina lālsai ho-tari.	Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila.

The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Endanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.

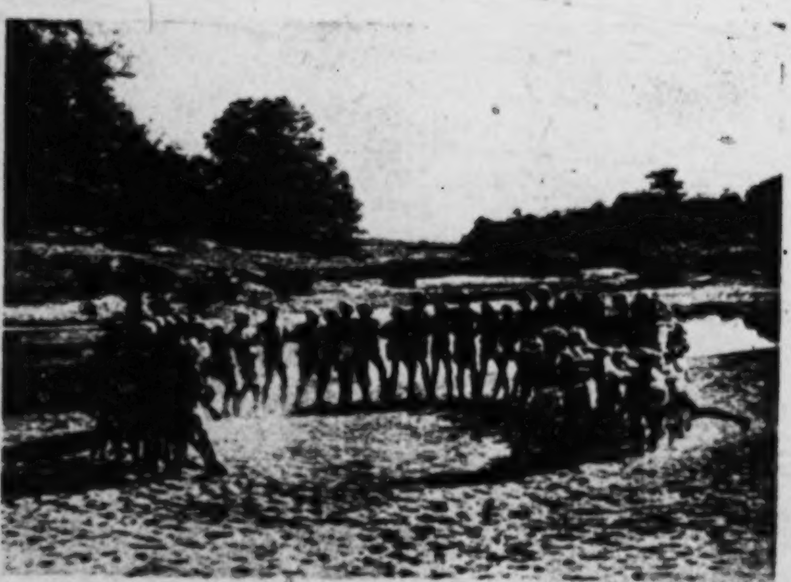


The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

x 883
x484
•796
535

Plate XCVII

Hulki dance at Alor

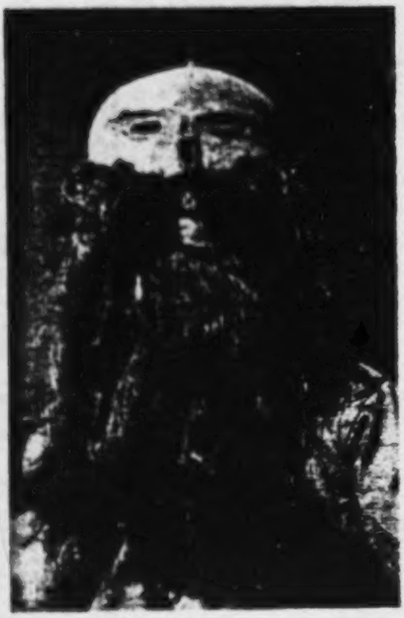


Hulki dance at Kolibera

[p. 500 (A)]

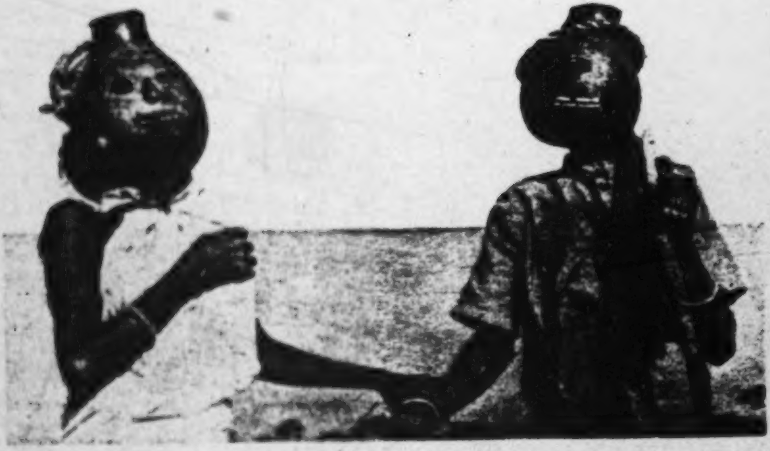
x883
x484
●796
535
532

Plate XCVIII



Hulki expedition mask
(From Sirpuri)

B



Chait Dandar masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Songs

1

Tare nare nare na nare

X883
X484
●796
535
539

Porre metta dippa tendera lālsai.	Cut the clearing on the top of the hill, Lalsai.
Dippa tendsi bāra kewerār lālsai ?	Why is the clearing to be cut ?
Dippa tendsi bāra bitirār lālsai ?	What will be sown in that clearing?
Dippa tendsi ganga parbat bitirār lālsai.	In that clearing *ganga parbat* seed will be sown.
Ganga bitsi bāra kewerār lālsai ?	What shall we do with that seed ?
Ganga pungār jhela jewerār lālsai.	We will put its flower in our turbans, Lalsai.

The *ganga parbat* is a specially profitable seed.

2

Tari na hari na morey, nāna hari nāna ho, ye na hari na morey na,
kanhaiya morey ye na, hari na morey na

Bhala kaise rowen more pandki parewān ho ?	How does my wood-pigeon cry, and my dove ?
Kaise rowen manjur ?	And how does my peacock cry ?
Bhala ghutru ghutru more pandki parewān ho ;	O *ghutru ghutru* cries my wood-pigeon and my dove ;
Dhoke dhoke manjur.	O *dhoke dhoke* cries my peacock.
Bhala kay chāra charen more pandki parewān ho ?	O what food has my wood-pigeon and my dove ?
Kāy chāra charen manjur ?	What food has my peacock ?
Bhala gotin charen more pandki parewān ho ;	My wood-pigeon and my dove eat small pieces of stone ;
Dhānen charen manjur.	My peacock eats rice.
Bhala kaisen sowen more pandki parewān ho ?	And how sleeps my wood-pigeon and my dove ?
Kaise sowen manjur ?	How sleeps my peacock ?
Bhala gura me sowen more pandki parewān ho ;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove sleep in their nests ;
Jhāre me sowen manjur.	And my peacock sleeps in the tree.
Bhala kahān pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho ?	O where do my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water ?
Kahān pāni piwen manjur ?	And where does my peacock drink ?
Bhala ghare pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho ;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water in the house ;
Bane pāni piwen manjur.	My peacock drinks water in the forest.

X883
X484
796
535

There are evidently no chastity taboos in the Mahua Dandar expeditions. Girls and boys went about with free and natural embraces that were a delight to watch. During the stick-dance, when a boy approached a girl he fancied, he waggled the bells on his buttocks furiously and laughed and flirted with her as she passed. In our camp a party of dancers stood for a long time watching us. Every boy had his arms round a girl, and the Belosa stood with two boys ; they were all embracing each other (see Plate XCI). There was no self-consciousness or shyness, no fear either of the stranger or the gods.

x883 x484 •796 535

You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Mahua Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V.. The Diwali Dances

[531 293]

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

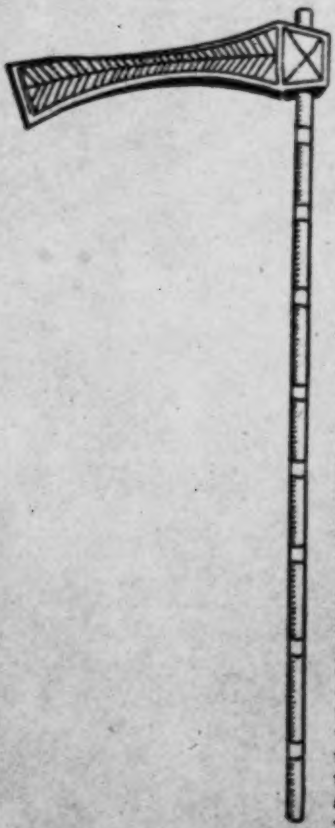


Fig. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

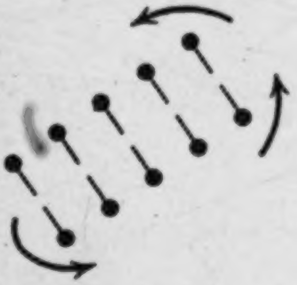
Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapai told me that he met his bride when she came from Markabera to dance. He took her three times to the jungle. 883x

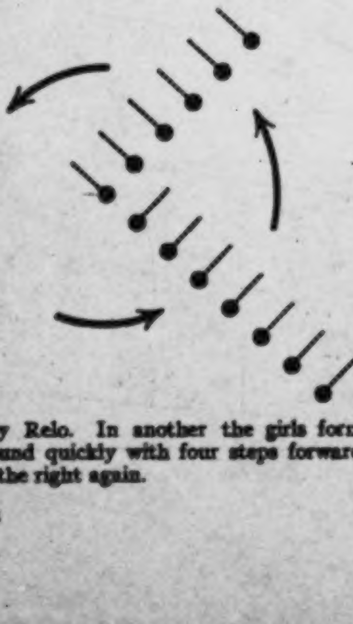
I will now trace the experiences of a party of these dancers as they go out from their village. 484x

796● For days discussions in the ghotul have centred round the girls' programme. Some of the girls have definite villages in mind; there is a handsome boy glimpsed for a moment at a last year's wedding: here is a famous drummer 535 and singer whom they all admire. The chelik are more concerned that their motiari will be properly fed and cared for. 'Last year such and such a village was very mean; don't go there this time,' they say. 'But that village gave you pork and a little ghee, it is worth a second visit.' The girls too have their memories, different ones. They have to consider too the prevailing clans, and the *bhum* of the places they propose to see. At last the programme is settled. The motiari are to go to seven villages and return home on the eighth day.

On the morning of their departure, the girls go to the shrine of the Village Mother, and the Gaita offers incense and promises food-sacrifice if they return safely. The girl leader, carrying an ornamented axe over her shoulder, takes fire from the shrine in a coil of rice-straw. She must preserve this fire throughout the tour. Other girls must not touch either the axe or fire, for they represent the village god. Then the Gaita takes the party to the boundary of the village and makes a line across the path, on which he puts little piles of rice, and seven rings of aonra leaf with some iron slag. Over this the girls step in single file while the Gaita prays, addressing all the gods of that part and the Departed, 'Our girls go out to dance the Diwali dance. Let them go well, let them come well. Let there be no fever, cough or cold. If they come unharmed, we will give you liquor, incense, eggs, a cock. They are going to a strange country; let them have no trouble. It is your duty to see to this'. And then with a sudden change of tone, 'If they return with fever, cough or cold, I will piss in your face'.



By now the girls have passed and the Gaita says no more to them, for they must go on their way without once looking round.



Presently they reach the first village on their tour programme. They go straight to the Gaita's house, pile their belongings, their extra wraps, their big baskets for collecting food, under a tree, and begin to dance. The Diwali dance takes several forms. One is a slow, monotonous dance, in a circle, clapping the hands and singing, mostly Relo. In another the girls form themselves into two rows and move round quickly with four steps forward and to the right, two back, then four to the right again.

X883
X484
•796
535
[539]

In Sidhāwand, the girls danced in two lines following each other. Each girl had her left hand on her neighbour's shoulder and her right hand hung straight down. They took two steps to the right, right, left, right, then slid the left foot along the ground.

When they first arrive, the Diwali dancers sing:

1

Thākur ghar kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's house, brothers?
Jora kukur bhuke re bhai rām,	Where a pair of dogs are barking, brothers,
Tehi thākur gharu re bhai rām.	There is the Thakur's house, brothers.
Thākur beta kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's son, brothers?
Jora kardhan pahire re bhai rām.	He has a double silver belt, brothers.
Tehi thākur beta re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's son, brothers.
Thākur bohāri kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers?
Jora suta pahire re bhai rām.	She has two bands round her neck, brothers.
Tehi thākur bohāri re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers.

2

Mulir mulir intoni kāri gurti!	You are crying army, army, O blackbird!
Aga baga da mulir kāri gurti?	Where has the army come from, blackbird?
Rainigarh da mulir dāda.	The army has come from Rainigarh, brother.
Hurrig lehka mulir dāda.	The army comes like a line of black ants, brother.
Dondera kayang talwār dāda.	The sword is long as the dondera fruit, brother.
Tormend tormend puja roy kāri gurti;	They are killing people *tormend tormend*, blackbird;
Mindāk tora reyandu roy kāri gurti;	The blood is flowing up to the knees, blackbird;
Luwur minu kubcāh roy kāri gurti;	*Luwur* fish are swimming in it, blackbird;
Nāri minu targanāh roy kāri gurti.	*Nāri* fish are swimming against the stream, blackbird.

A crowd soon gathers, attracted not so much by the dance as by the desire to see who has come. The local chelik are very excited and bustle to and fro making arrangements. They send their own girls to clean the ghotul, but once that is done forbid them to come near. Their own girls are planning to go out themselves in two days' time, so they do not really mind.

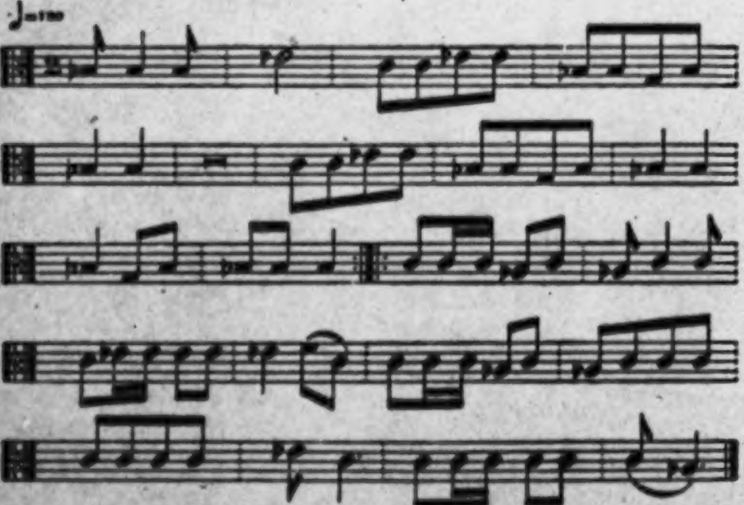
In Remawand, when the girls from Markabera came, the Remawand boys went round the village collecting rice, pulse and salt, and cooked it under a tree near the Gaita's house. When the girls had finished singing they camped in the ghotul, taking complete possession of it, spreading their things everywhere; some of them lay down and slept at once, tired with the journey and in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

883^x
484^x
796●
535

After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

I



[533]

Banda rola pungār wo āyo.	In the lake there is a flower.
Pungār mihichāla dāhāge āya.	I go to put it in my hair.
Nīma icho hamma wo nani.	Don't go, little daughter.
Bona suda dahi wo nani?	Who will go with you there?

883^x
484^x
796
535
539

x883 *Māmān marri mantor go āya:*	There is my *māma*'s son:
x484 *Ona suda dāha wo āya.*	I will go with him.
Tāra nāwa sandra go āya.	Give me my *sandra* cloth.
Sandra nana uhka go āya.	I will wear my cloth.
●796 *Kosa wāri polka go āya;*	The *polka* jacket is made of silk;
535 *Tāra nāwa polka go āya.*	Bring me that jacket.
Wāler igāda tukil wo āya;	The basket was made by the Nahar;
Tāra nāwa tukil wo āya.	Give me my basket.
539 *Muyāng end-leng hocha go āya;*	The measure has little bells round it;
Tāra nāwa kocha go āya.	Bring me the measure.
Kawdāng end-leng humār go āya;	The *gundri* is adorned with cowries;
Tāra nāwa humār go āya.	Bring me the *gundri*.
Hupe lolor wati go āya!	O the jungle clearing of the rats!
Hupe lehkā dāha go āya.	Like a rat I will go.
Nana waronāy atona āya.	I will go all alone.
Saboy tāskun dāynur go āya.	For everyone has left me.
Kape kankār bera go āya,	Over the field of the *kapu* bird,
Kape lehka parriya ha āya.	Like a bird I will go.

2

Aga baga pārewāng roy dele?	Whence are these pigeons?
Dongur bhum tāng pārewāng roy dele.	The pigeons have come from the highlands.
Aga baga raiya nung roy dele?	Where have the pigeons settled?
Gāita dāda duār re roy dāda.	In the Gaita's court.
Kile re koru rachāte roy dele,	In front of his fence,
Agāye ise raiytāng roy dele.	There they have settled.

3

Kumda phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the pumpkin, boys.
Tuma phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the gourd, boys.
Kākri phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the cucumber, boys.
Mogra phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *mogra*, boys.
Keonra phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *keonra*, boys.
Chameli phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *chameli*, boys.
Gulāp phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the rose, boys.
Āma phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the mango, boys.

4

Dāda le waiya munke re korha kiton;	In front you have built a cow-shed, brother;
Perke ne purka kiton, dāda.	Behind you have made a grain-bin, brother.
Murwine pāt jaliyal, dāda,	The peacock is on the roof, brother.
Pinjora te maina kiton, dāda.	The maina is in its cage, brother.
Rachāte gāda kiton, dāda.	The cart is in the courtyard, brother.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Latite howe hiton, dāda.	The monkey is on the pole, brother.	883x
Nawchāre pāt te chidral, dāda.	The rat is in the rafters, brother.	
Kena ye mawadn āywin, dāda!	What a rich man you are, brother!	484x
Ḍalate hesa himun, dāda,	Give us a basketful, brother,	
Kāwir te hitāp āyār, dāda.	A full load, brother.	796●
Jiwa tun hami kema, dāda.	Don't give less than that, brother.	
Niyare poroy poykom, dāda.	Then we will throw [praises] on you, brother.	535
		539

5

Muda muda intoni dāda!	Ring, Ring, say Ring, brother!
Guru pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a blacksmith girl,
Kachi muda hewerom dāda.	She would have given an iron ring.
Sonār pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a goldsmith girl,
Soni muda wāterom dāda.	She would have given a gold ring.
Kauro pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been of the Kauro clan,
Kawra muda hewerom dāda.	She would have given a cowrie ring,
Kudum dāha wāterom dāda.	And she would have walked stamping her feet.
Dinda layor ātekroy dāda,	Had you been an unmarried boy, brother,
Kudum dāha wāta roy dāda,	You too would have walked stamping your feet,
Māte muth ha hewerom dāda.	And we would have beaten you with our fists.

From time to time girls would jump up and try to run into the ghotul to sleep, but the boys were generally quick enough to catch them. This went on all night, alternating dance and pleasant talk. Every now and then a boy pulled a girl out of the ghotul and away into the fields. No one took any notice, though there was a little laughter when they returned. The girls took it in turns to get a little sleep; there were generally three or four girls sleeping at any one time.

883x
484x
796
535

In the morning, the girls first sang outside the Gaita's house and the boys went round the village collecting a basket of rice for their journey and the midday meal which they would eat beside a stream half-way to their next village. When the boys returned, suddenly the girls ran to the ghotul leaving four of their number standing in line. These put two pice on the ground. Two of the boys ran to pick up the money and as they bent down the girls thumped them on the back. Then the boys took the baskets of rice down to the ghotul, put it on the ground, and the girls had to pull it away without getting hit. They emptied the basket and put it outside the gate; the boys made a dash for it, but were again caught and beaten. Then the girls, accompanied by the Gaita, went again to the boundary; a line was drawn across the path, they stepped over it and went their way.

This programme was repeated every night for a week, and then the girls went home. I witnessed their return at Binjhli and Bandopal. On the 18th of November, 1941, the chelik of Binjhli were very excited and busy. They took a whole cartload of wood into the jungle. They dug a pit in the ground, long and deep but narrow enough to bear a row of pots full of rice and pork. They lit the fire and prepared the feast. About 6 p.m. came the news that the motiari were approaching, and the boys ran through the forest towards a footpath some two hundred yards away.

X883
X484
●796
535

Here were sitting the Gaita and a Siraha; across the path was the usual line of ash, a row of tiny green-rings of aonra leaf, bits of egg-shell.[1] We sat and waited. Suddenly out of the jungle came the line of motiari, eighteen of them, bearing themselves most proudly, their rows of silvered combs and ornaments shining in the evening light. The chelik smiled in welcome and delight. It was an unforgettable moment.

The first girl reached the line across the path and squatted down before it. The Siraha fell into trance asking the gods if all was well. The leader of the chelik waved two chickens round her head and she was allowed to pass. The other girls stepped directly over the line, one by one in single file. They put their bundles in the ghotul, then went to the Gaita's house and began to dance and sing. They were weary and hoarse after their week's continual singing, but they danced for half an hour, and then made an end.

Now night was falling, and the boys in great excitement went back to the jungle and finished cooking the feast. Two big girls, who had been in their menstrual period—as the boys informed me at the top of their voices—and so could not go on the trip, were making leaf-plates and cups. Soon the motiari came and sat in a long line; boys ran to and fro with torches. The chelik first served palm wine, then bits of highly chillied pork and rice on leaf-plates. My wife sat and ate with the girls; I had a place to myself near the fire, and enjoyed the feast as much as anyone. The flavour of the food was excellent and it was well cooked; at least it did me no harm.

The elders of the village also came and even some of the Ganda and Kalar. When they and the girls had eaten, the chelik were able to sit and take their supper. At last all went to the ghotul. They were too tired and excited to dance; they lay down together and slept.

On the evening of the following day, the girls gave a feast to the boys in the same place, using the rice and pulse that they had collected on their expedition.

At Bandopal, the chelik made a feast for the girls in a shed on the edge of a field near the village. They cooked rice, pulse and fish, crabs and frogs that the boys had caught specially for the feast. When the motiari assembled, they were given liquor. Then, holding the leaf-cups in one hand, they saluted the chelik with the other. After this the Jhoria, head of the chelik, asked the girls where they had been, what food they had been given, what entertainment they had received, and whether there had been any trouble or sickness on the way. The girls gave a lively account of everything that had happened, describing how they had been given here a chicken, there a pig, and here had been meanly received. The Jhoria declared that when girls or boys came from those villages they would be treated as they had treated them.

In Bandopal, the purification ceremony was not held on arrival but the following morning. The girls were taken outside the village by the Gaita and the boys. The Gaita made the usual line of ash, and sacrificed liquor, eggs and chickens. Some branches were placed across the path and the girls told to step over them and go home. As they went the chelik hit them on the back 'to drive away disease'.

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[1] When Juang return from similar expeditions, at a cross-roads near the village boundary a line of date palm leaves, bhoir thorns, and an ebony branch is made across the path. The leader says, 'Whatever devils are dancing after us, let them return hence and follow us no more'. Each dancer in turn spits and steps across the line and so goes home without looking round. The Juang do this even on ordinary occasions when they return after a visit to another village. The Savara, and I have no doubt many other tribes also, take similar precautions whenever they visit other villages for a ceremonial purpose.

x883
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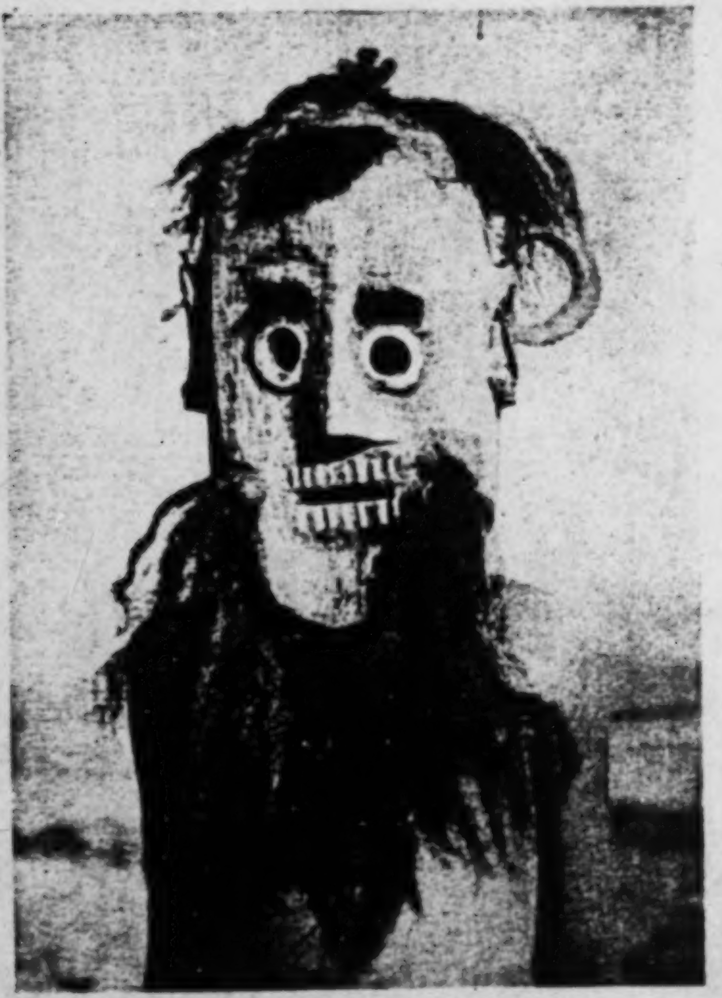
532

Plate XCIX



Mask used in Chherta dances (From Berma)

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

VI. The Hulki Dances

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As we move east, the custom of allowing girls to go to dance by themselves from village to village at Diwali gradually weakens. Indeed the Diwali dance of the girls is almost co-terminal with the Pus Kolang dance, although in isolated villages like Surma in eastern Kondagaon the Diwali is still kept up. Where it has died out, its place is often taken by the Hulki expedition. Just as the Chait Dandar has replaced the Pus Kolang and boys and girls go together instead of boys only, so the Hulki replaces the Diwali dance and boys and girls go together instead of girls only. The Hulki expedition is sometimes made in the ordinary way and boys and girls go out for a week's tour; sometimes they simply go out for the day or for a long evening to neighbouring villages and return to their own ghotul to sleep. There is no special decoration worn, except that boys put on all the clothes they have and the girls adorn themselves with their prettiest ornaments.

When they start, the dancers perform the same sort of ceremonies for their protection and success as is done in the other dances. A line of rings is made and the Gaita promises suitable offerings if the party returns safely. The leader of the party, who is still called the Gain, prays, 'May our song and dance be good, may the rhythm keep time, may the tune not be spoilt, let no witch or magician injure us, let us not be attacked by Arjatta Parjatta, Bhut, Massan, Jurelin, Mirchuk, Matia of other villages. May the gods of the villages we visit not trouble us'.

The visitors dance and collect food and liquor as usual and are generally joined by the boys and girls of the village they are visiting. Hosts dance in one line, visitors in another. At Bhandarsiuni they sang a song in honour of Lingo. When the Bhandarsiuni party, which included many big boys but only very little girls, visited Sirpuri on 28 October, 1941, it was amusing to note how bored the Sirpuri *boys* were with the visit, though the Sirpuri girls bustled about with great excitement to arrange entertainment for their visitors.

When the boys go for Hulki, with perhaps only a few girls, the members of the two ghotul dance against each other till one party becomes exhausted.

Often the members of the two ghotul dance together. It was at such a time that the Jholer of Morenga—and many another—met his bride. 'I went to dance at Mundpal and a girl pushed her way through the crowd and danced beside me. I put my arm round her and rested my hand on her breast. Later I gave her liquor to drink and we slipped away into the jungle. After a few months, we ran away together and were married.'

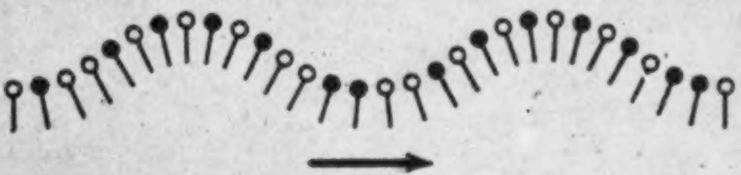
The actual dance, which is called Hulki or Kokti, is a serpentine promenade in which boys and girls, clasped in each other's arms, combine a rhythmic movement with all sorts of fun. It is a quick and jolly dance, delightful to watch and, I suspect, entrancing (provided the circumstances are right) to dance.

Boys and girls form a long line all facing one way. They hold each other by placing the right arm lightly across the right-hand neighbour's bottom, while the left hand holds the right arm of the left-hand neighbour but one which is, of course, resting across the immediate left-hand neighbour's back. The method is most easily understood by looking at Plate CXIII. The dance often begins with only boys holding each other rather loosely with a wide inviting space between each pair. Girls one by one burrow in, pushing their heads down under the boys' arms. The dance is so intimate that girls have to see who their neighbours are; they ought not to have on either side of them a member of their own clan or a relative of some forbidden degree.

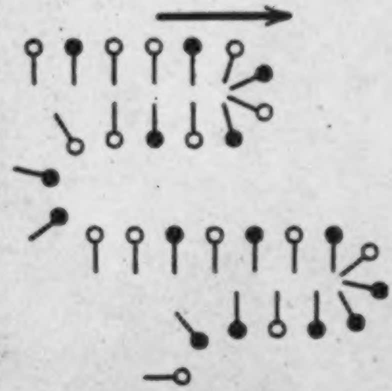
x883
x484
● 796
535

The line moves to left or right with a very simple, rapid step sideways. The dancers generally keep perfect step, and all the legs come over together in a delightful way. The line reverses its direction with a loud cry of *Jai hoowra jai mongra* (as if we were to cry 'Victory to the lily and the rose!') or *Hurĕ hurĕ hurĕ, Sālĕ sālĕ sālĕ*, or even a sharp barking noise.

Now the line that began like this—

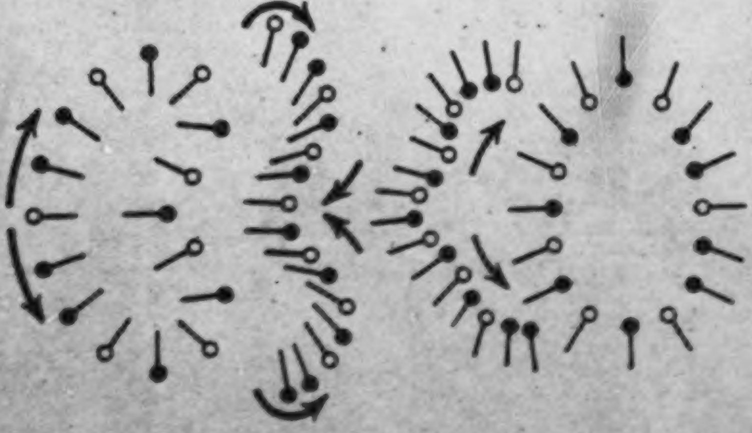


winds round and back on itself, like this—



This, of course, is great fun; when the line winds back the dancers all bump their behinds against each other; the leader suddenly ducks under a gap in the line and makes it thread through itself; he begins to go very fast or tries to pull the line over, and there is a regular tug-of-war; they form into a big circle, head and tail of the line joining hands, first facing inwards, then with a movement like pulling a glove inside out they turn themselves into a circle facing outwards

All the time the quick, fresh, even step never changes—so long as the song remains the same. But at last the dancers change to a *Nāna nāna rĕ* motif, and then the step gets more of a swing in it, until at the end it



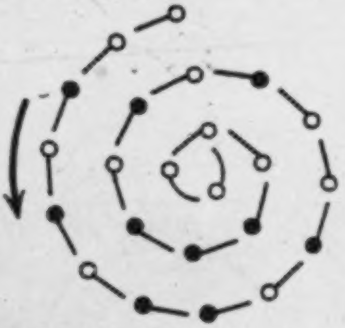
develops into a new movement—three steps to the left with a skip on the third step, then one step back to the right on the right foot with a good swing, half-left with the left foot which then goes back directly to the left. This is a pleasant change. Finally the line spaces itself out; the boys and girls resign their happy intimacy and stretch out hand in hand, whereon they repeat the same steps and movements.

883x
484x
796 ●
535

In Pupgaon the head and the tail of the line each held sticks; at one point they met and held each other's sticks; the rest of the line had first to pass over them and then below, after which they worked round again into a complete circle.

Some of the best Hulki dancing I have seen, vigorous, precisely regular, dramatic, exciting, was at Alor. The boys and girls stood in line facing forwards, each with the left hand on the shoulder of the one in front, thus giving a slightly 'half-right' inclination. The steps were five paces forward, right foot up to left and half back; five paces back, left back to right and half forward; five paces forward and so continue; reverse at a shout; five paces back, left foot swung in and out.

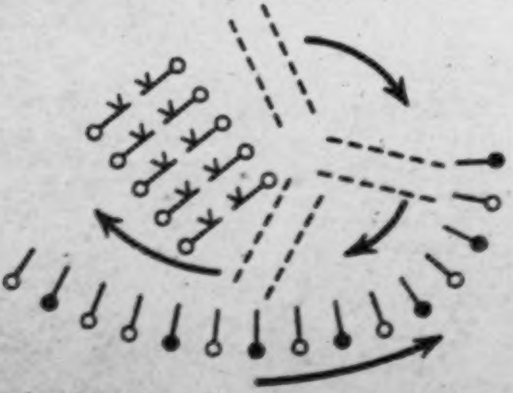
Sometimes the Hulki line rolls itself up like a centipede—



In fact there is no limit to what the Hulki dancers cannot do. It is the liveliest and happiest of all the dances and the boys and girls hate to leave off once they have begun.

In the north of Kondagaon Tahsil (I have seen it at Sidhawand and Amgaon, but only there) the Hulki is danced with drums, small *hulki-māndri* which the boys grasp with the left hand and beat very fast with the right. The drummers form two lines facing each other, while the girls and the rest of the boys form the usual Hulki line (see below).

The Hulki songs bear little relation to the dance. Those sung in the earlier stages have the refrain *Silip rêle role role*; those sung later have the refrain *Arê tina mâmur adna re.*



Songs

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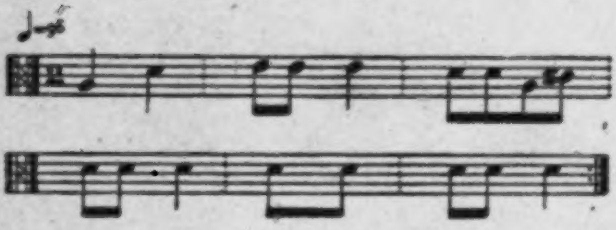
[533]

1



X 883
X484
796
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539

Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho!	O the sixteenfold earth and the ninefold heaven!
Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?	Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?
Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāl ho.	Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.
Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho!	O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!
Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.	The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.
Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.	The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.
Nadum narka diya lariyo nike poroy poytom ho.	At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.
Hongu dāpu āyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.	Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

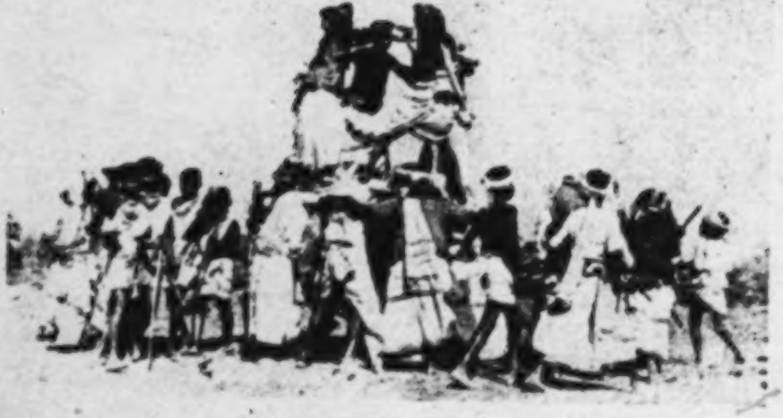
Aring koring bāder roy.	Clouds are over heaven.
Poron bāder poyndu roy.	The sky is overcast with clouds.
Darka pirru dar dar roy,	The rain comes pouring down,
Jimti piru jim jim roy.	Then drizzles drop by drop.
Dori usa handu roy,	Towards the sunset flows a flood,
Dakka pehchor handu roy.	Forcing its way along.

3

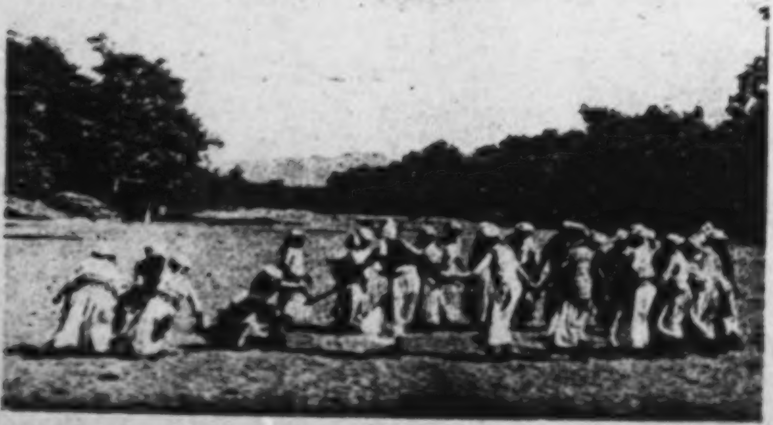
Gugti gugti māri māri kohore.	Let us play *dudu* in the dust.
Kum dudu dudu roy he bai?	Are you coming to play *dudu*?
Dud harsi wayeni he bai,	I would like to come, but I can't,
Wāyon āyo wāyona he dāda;	Mother is in the house;
Lone dai manta roy he dāda.	She will be angry with me.
Niya dai match roy he bai.	Don't bother about her.
Sura weri jhāpi roy he bai;	The basket has seven chains;
Jhāpite sandra hitona he bai.	I have put cloth into the basket.
Bashe wone hitoni he dāda?	When did you give it?
Konam wador joli roy he bai;	When you were in your cradle;

K883
● 796
535

Plate CI



Pus Kolang: the Monkey dance



Pus Kolang: the Kohothar dance at Koilibera

[p. 512 (A)]

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● 796
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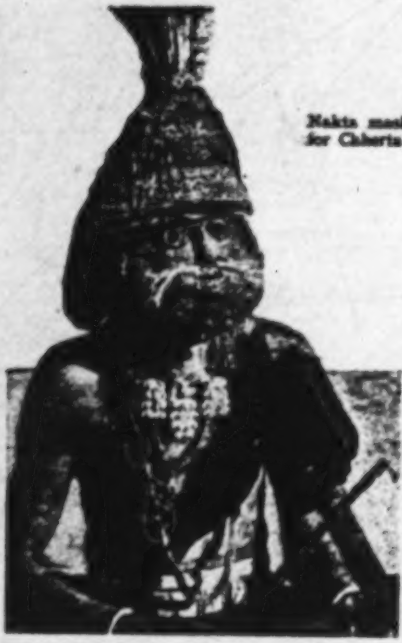
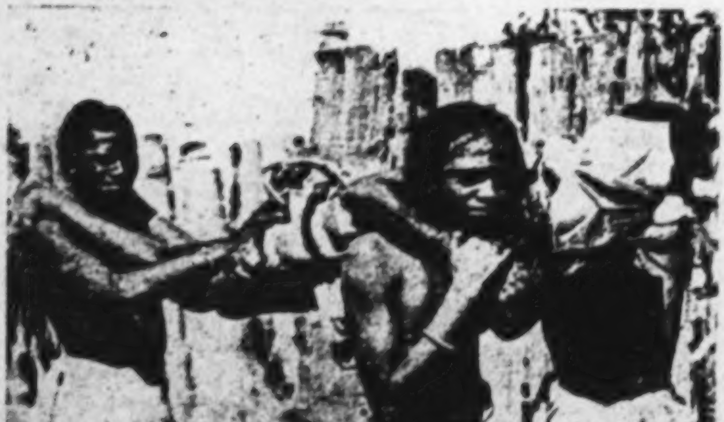
532✓



Nakta mask used
for Chherta dance

Plate CII

Masked chelik
representing a
frog or leopard,
at Phunder



[p. 512 (a)]

x883
x484
●796
535
539

Jolit nima mandi roy he bai,	You were swinging in your cradle.
Ashe nana hilona he bai.	Then I put the cloth for you.
Sandra ise hitek roy he dāda,	If you have given cloth, brother,
Nana ise wāyha roy he dāda,	Then I will come, brother,
Jori ise āykāt roy he dāda.	And we will live as yoke-fellows, brother.

4

Bhālur beti rāni hai men lure jāy ho?	Where is the bear's queenly daughter?
Bhālur beti rāni dongri men lure jāy ho.	She is playing on the hill.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān pāni jāy ho?	Where is she drawing water?
Bhālur beti rāni tariya men pāni jāy ho.	She is drawing it from the tank.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān sutela jāy ho?	Where does she sleep?
Bhālur beti rāni dorgi men sutela jāy ho.	The bear's queenly daughter sleeps in the little stream.

5

Miti bolo mitiyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.	O sweet-spoken coolie girl, show me the way.
Mai ni jāno dāhar bābu mai ni jāno hor ho;	I don't know the way, brother;
Pāni ghāt me jābe bābu paniyārin la puchbe re ho.	Go to the water-place and ask the water-girls.
Ye bai paniyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.	O water-girl, tell me the way.
Kor me khele kor larka larka la puch lebe ho.	O boy, ask the boys playing in the road.
He bābu leroko thākur ghar kon re ho?	Where is the house of the Thakur, O boy?
Yewni jewni chor debe jābe manja gali re ho,	Turn neither left nor right, and go straight on,
Rang pote chuhi pote tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the walls have been washed in colour and white,
Jawra bawra kukur bhuke tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the dogs Jawra Bawra are barking,
Kama me to āti bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where an elephant is tied to a pole,
Ala me to ghora bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a horse is tied in the shed,
Lawa me to bainsa dube tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the buffaloes are tethered in the yard,
Kota me to gaiya bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the cows are shut in the shed,
Dāng me to bandra jule tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a monkey swings on a bamboo pole,
Chhāni me to manjur nāche tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a peacock is dancing on the roof,
Pinjora me to mena bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a maina sings in its cage,

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Kat me to suwa bole tahi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a parrot talks on a wooden perch, that is the Thakur's house.
He bai thakurain thākur kahān gais re ho?	Where is the Thakur, O Thakurain?
Hāt me tenga daris bhaiya rāja ke sewa gais re ho.	With a stick in his hand he has gone to serve the Raja.
Kaiya tere haiya bhāji nadi tir ke haiya re ho.	The *kahuwa* tree is on the river bank.
Amor thākur la to rāja ghar le maya re ho;	Our Thakur has the love of the Raja's house.
Arri thākur parri jo chong bharela dewe re ho.	The Raja gave him tobacco to smoke.
Keni tere keni bhāji bāri tir ke keni re ho.	The *keni-bhāji* grows near the fence.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke beni gāte re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden plait.
Airi tere airi bhai tarai ke airi re ho.	The ducks live in the tank.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke peri pinde re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter wears golden anklets.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke paniya konche re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden comb in her hair.

6

Meta porro tingi te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the top of the hill?
Meta porro tingi te bodāl gore lāta ho.	The bison is swinging on the top of the hill.
Gora lariyo boda di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O bison!
Bodāl da tokār te bātāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the bison's tail?
Bodāl da tokār te chachi gore lāta ho.	The *chachi* bird is swinging on its tail.
Kene dor dhamki te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging under the hill?
Kene dor dhamki te yekla gore lāta ho.	Under the hill the pig is swinging.
Gora lariyo yeklā di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O pig!
Turjing arta bharri te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging in the field of thick grass?
Turjing arta bharri te korwal gore lāta ho.	In the grass-field the sambhar is swinging.
Pāwur marra tonda te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the siari tree?
Pāwur marra tonda te munj gore lāta ho.	The monkey is swinging on the siari tree.
Gora lariyo munj di nikun sobhe māta ho.	Your swing looks very fine, O monkey!

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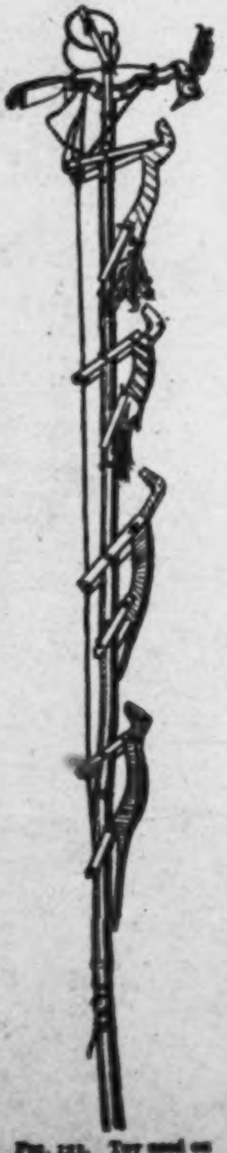

Fig. 123. Toy used on Chherta expeditions
Length 6′ 6″

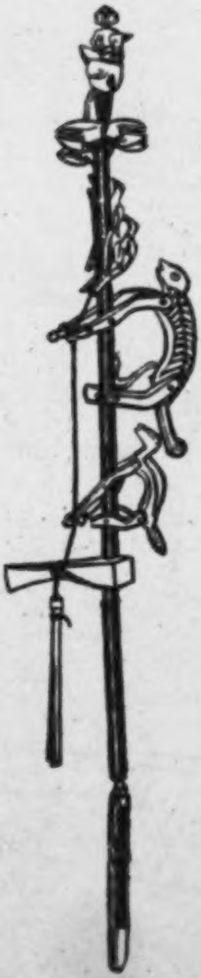

Fig. 124. Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions
Length 4′ 6″

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII. THE CHHERTA DANCE

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As we have seen, many ghotul do not perform the Pus Kolang dances. Some do not even go to dance the Mahua Dandar. In such places, the chelik concentrate on the Chherta festival. In many other villages, however, the Chherta is danced side by side with the older dances.

The Muria say that at the marriage between Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai the supplies of food and liquor for the visitors ran out, and the chelik assisting at the ceremony were sent to beg for food and liquor from neighbouring villages. They did so, and the marriage was happily completed. The more Hinduized Muria villages and the Hindus of Bastar generally have the same tradition, but they say that the marriage was between Mahadeo and Parvati. I doubt whether the Chherta dance is a genuine Muria dance or very long established in their culture; it is common throughout Chhattisgarh and in the Central Provinces, whence it has probably been imported.

Its attractiveness to the Muria is that it is great fun. In enables them to get a little liquor and have a feast. It is not overshadowed by the catastrophic penalties that come upon those who break the taboos of the serious, dangerous Pus Kolang. For this reason the Chherta has spread widely throughout the centre and east of the Muria territory.

On a Chherta expedition boys and girls go together. They dance in the ghotul of the villages they visit and sleep there. Hosts and visitors entertain one another. The visiting party salutes the elders of the ghotul at night and they then exchange girls for massaging. The visitors, however, take fire from their own village and are supposed to cook for themselves.

During the day the visiting party goes round the village dancing and begging. The leader of the dance is a boy whom they call the Nakta.[1] He is dressed up, sometimes in tattered clothes, sometimes in finery, and wears a grotesque gourd mask. The gourd is generally decorated: two rings are put for eyes, a nose is made of wax, a mouth is cut and a number of grains are stuck in it to look like teeth. A beard of the hair of nilgai or bear is attached below. A bunch of peacock feathers is tied to the top. I saw one mask with a small wax bullock placed above the nose. As the dancers go through the village they stand in a line before each house, and beat the ground with long sticks while the Nakta capers about before them with the most grotesque gestures and antics. Two or more boys carry baskets, and while the others dance these go into the house and beg for liquor, rice, pulse or other food. When they have been round the village the girls who have accompanied them take what has been collected and cook their meal.

On return from the expedition the boys and girls take the Nakta to the nearest stream, roll him in the mud, duck him in the water, and give him *mandia roti*, making him eat it with his head under water.

Besides the Nakta, other diversions enliven the Chherta festival. In Remawand I saw an ingenious toy—a stout bamboo pole was decorated with some excellently carved monkeys climbing up towards a bird perched on the top. An arrangement of strings kept both monkeys and bird in motion (Fig. 123). At Koilibera, there was a similar toy which was taken also on Pus Kolang and other expeditions. At the bottom of the bamboo pole the wood was serrated to make a 'musical rasp', and at the top was a little man.

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[1] Nakta is an abusive term meaning 'noseless'. It probably refers to the custom of cutting off an erring wife's nose, for it is usually applied to sexually loose persons. It can also be used in an affectionate playful sense. A Nakti Devi is worshipped in parts of Chhattisgarh.

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

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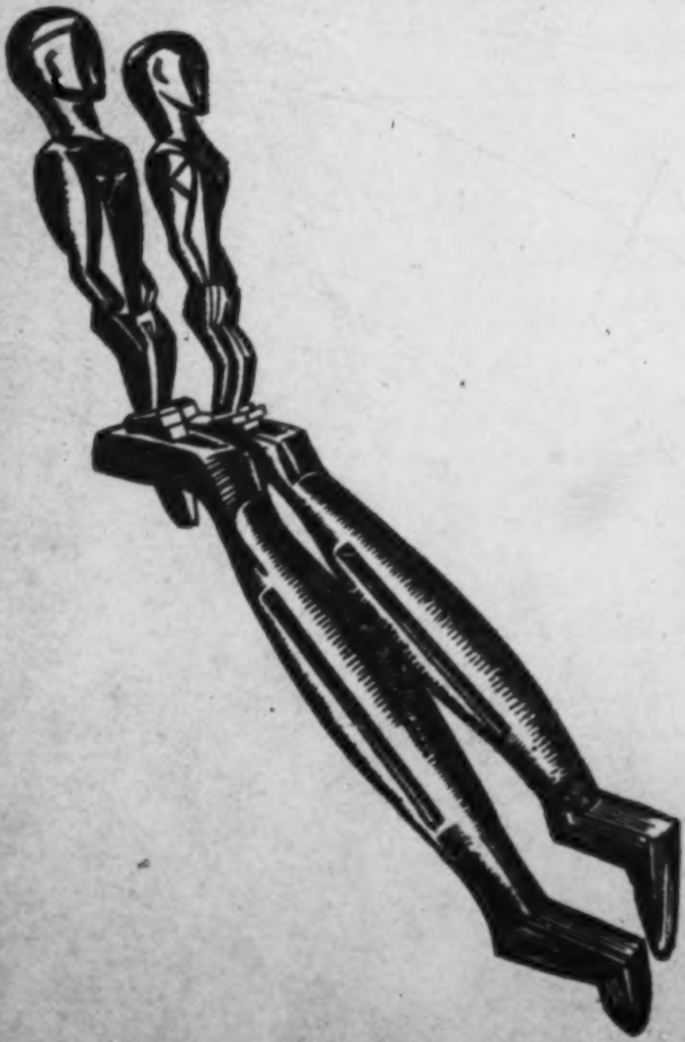

Fig. 125. Gonga from Alor
Cf. Plate CV

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In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4″ peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½″ from the base. The female is ½″ shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2′ 6½″ from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½″ long, ⅞″ broad and 2″ deep.

[243]

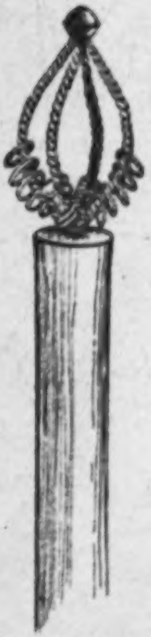

FIG. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jarar-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

I

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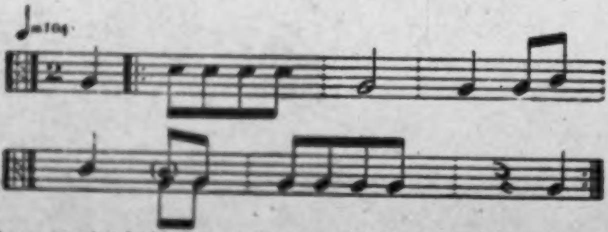

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[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

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Ban bhainsa āna tāna khāye lasun pāna pāna jām kuy.	The jungle buffaloes go here and there eating garlic leaves.
Chari buli āo bhainsa rupa bera thāna thāna jām kuy.	Come buffaloes and graze in the silver field.
Khat kurha cho hānia kuda; •kalār gharo bhātti bhātti;	There are thorns in the pile of rubbish; there is an outstill in the Kalar's house;
Bhātti cho mundi he āg lage; pinda he chābli chāti chāti.	The top of the still caught fire, the ant bit the buttocks.
Bhukute bhuku hai kuwāri dengur cho bhuku ho ho.	There are maggots in the new ant-hill.
Pila rāja bairamgarh jora chawar duku ho ho.	The baby Raja of Bairamgarh is fanned with a pair of fans.
Kar karāti karāti pipar pān cho deti deti.	The pipal leaf has nipples.
Chirak charak mand beche jāt kalāring beti ho ho;	The Kalarin's daughter is selling liquor drop by drop;
Tan tan rupaiya gine kalāring bai ho ho jām kuy.	She is counting her rupees *tan tan*.

2

Jhirliti jhirliti pandki māra liti.	*Jhirliti jhirliti*, the pigeon killed the sparrow.
Dokara dokari jhagra hola chāpun dila luthi.	The dotard quarrelled with his dame and burnt her with a fire-brand.
Ao dokari chhandaiyla tola dehun roti.	Come, old woman, and I will give you bread.
Roti pitha kai karhun? Bare bāp ke beti.	What am I to do with your bread? I am the daughter of a rich man.
Gāda upar garli chonda upar khila.	On top of a big cart is a little cart, and the poles are joined with a nail.
Gāra cheghi hākdela sidhāwandiya pila.	To ride on this cart a chelik from Sidhawand is invited.
Amli boti tingāli pur duwāre mācha.	The tamarind fruit is very sour; the platform is in the yard.
Mācha cheghi hākdela duyi māma bhācha.	The uncle and his nephew are called to sit on the platform.
Naya nāngār bāri bāri juna nāngār bāri.	On the new plough is tied a strap, on the old plough is a strap.
Ye gaon cho lekimanke kolepa nilo ari,	The children of this village were carried away by a fox,
Kolepa cho beta beti amke balla dādi.	And its children will call us grandfather.
Chher chherta ki mer mera, bāman dorgoda.	*Chher chherta ki mer mera, bāman dorgoda.*
Denga dāda yete rala pawli adgada.	A tall man was coming along, and his foot was caught.
Nāni lāwa guri guri bade lāwa guri.	The little quail is sweet, so is the big quail.
Jhatke bida des kāka tucho mai cho pudi.	Quickly give us alms, uncle, or your mother's vagina.

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Pāni suna pāni suna lendi barli duna.	A water dog with a cup full of excreta.
Ayele pār cho kokoda paile paile jayse.	Cranes from here go to the other side.
Paile pār cho rāut leka mārun mārun khāyse.	The Rawat boy there kills and eats them.
Sipi sipi dongri kosa cho dori.	The hill of shells, the cord of silk cocoons.
Tucho beta ke dakhle māma sānjh bera.	I saw your son, at evening time.
Adan lasa dhaura lasa pondhke dharli kasa.	The gum of saja, gum of dhaura, like holding someone's buttocks.
Aware bai chikan khosa, bhelwān tel ke ghasa.	O come, girl with hair well-done, I'll cover you with *bhelwa* oil.
Kāri āma lure lure, pandri āma lure.	O the black mangoes, O the white mangoes, are hanging down in heavy clusters.
Mahādeo ke parsād me pandri baile mile.	By the grace of Mahadeo we will get a light-coloured girl.

3

Come out, girls, to see what boys have come.
They have come from the Upper World.
Give us our present quickly, for it is growing very late.
Tie up a pair of bullocks:
Kill a fat hen: bring rice out of the granary.

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Chelik dancing at the Kokoko festival

Plate CXLII

Chelik collecting offerings at the Kokoko festival

[p.626 (B)]

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. The Ghotul Festivals

X 883 THROUGHOUT this book we have seen the important part that the chelik play in the religious life of the tribe. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for the coming harvest; their drumming and dancing adds
• 796 excitement and delight to the dreariest routine. They serve very much the function of a choir, a choir, moreover, which contains a rather high proportion
828 of theological students. For many of these boys are already training to be clan-priests, Kaser-Gaita or Siraha mediums. At the time of sacrifice the Gaita may take his son and make him perform the actual rite, anxiously watching to see that there is no mistake. At Masora, Lakmu and his son Phirtu carried the Anga on their shoulders together and were moved to and
[785] fro by a divine inspiration that came equally to both. I have often seen young chelik dancing in trance, beating themselves with iron scourges, and tossing their dark beautiful hair into wild disorder.

X 883 But in addition to being choir-boys and acolytes for their elders, the chelik have festivals of their own which are closely connected with the ghotul. At
796 Diwali, before the motiari go out on their dancing expeditions,[1] the boys and girls collect parched rice and have a feast in the ghotul, at which they admit new members and give them their titles.

At Jhakri, they described how at Diwali the motiari bring parched rice and gur for Tallur Muttai who, in this ghotul, lives in one of the pillars. They offer it first to her, and then all feast together. At Gorma, there was a stone by the village boundary where the children went for this feast. Decorations, sometimes elaborately made with ears of rice and flowers, are strung over the ghotul door.

At Dassera, which is not observed in the villages, the chelik dress one of their number as a Raja, put him on a throne, sometimes even on a wooden chariot; the 'ghotul ryots' bring him presents and he gives gifts to the Diwan, Tahsildar and other State servants. Every boy and girl brings two cucumbers which, in ghotul currency, represent two goats. They stick wooden legs into them and sacrifice them to Danteshwari. They invite a few of the village elders and have a feast in the ghotul.

In some villages—I have noted the custom in the Chalka Pargana—the chelik and motiari have their own version of the Irpu Pandum. At the end of the mahua season they spend three days collecting the flowers—this must be done at the end of the season, for it is believed that after these three days the flowers stop falling—and make liquor for themselves, boiling the flowers in water with slices of mango. If there is a Kalar out-still contractor in the village, they give him a fowl and some rice in compensation. They offer some of this liquor to the village gods, the boys and girls dance from house to house, and they eat and drink in honour of the mahua tree. 883x 796

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[1] Such ceremonial parades are not unknown elsewhere. The Chherta and similar dances are common throughout Middle India. 'It is a well-known practice', so C. R. Krishnamacharlu informs me, 'in the Tamil, Telugu and Kanara areas of Southern India for village schoolmasters and their students to go to the several households of the villages singing laudatory songs and receiving presents during the Dassera holidays.' The boys carry decorated bows and shoot sandal powder at their hosts. Krishnamacharlu compares this to the Chelidonia festival of ancient Rhodes, when boys went singing and begging from door to door. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 53 and Vol. III, p. 63.

In Palli-Barkot, and other villages of that neighbourhood, when the villagers first cut the rice crop, each householder thrashes a handful of grain in his hands and takes it to the ghotul. There the Gaita ties it up in a bundle with paddy string—to imitate the usual household grain-bin—and hangs it up in the roof. In the month of Magh, a little of this grain is taken out, husked on a stone, and offered to Thakur Deo for the protection of the village. There is a feast that night in the ghotul, and the whole village comes for it, only the married women sitting outside. Here they say that it is not the presence of Lingo that keeps the married women out of the ghotul, but the blessed rice-seed which might otherwise be ruined. Later, at the first fall of the rains, the Gaita distributes a little of the seed to every householder.

II. Ceremonial Axe-cultivation

Everywhere the chelik are specially associated with the cutting of timber for *parka* or *dippa* cultivation. For *parka*, it will be remembered, wood is cut at a distance and brought and strewed over a field and then fired for manure. In *dippa* the trees and undergrowth are cut on the spot and fired there, and the seed is sown in the ashes. In Bandopal, in April 1941, and in Nayanar two days later I saw a ceremony that combined the cleaning of the village with the consecration of the first *parka* plot. At dawn the chelik assembled in the ghotul. The four leading boys carried large baskets and were unadorned; the rest were fantastically attired with turbans of old rope, fronds of broom-grass stuck in the hair, smeared with ash, and already hung about with old baskets, winnowing-fans and scraps of matting. When they were ready, the party set out waving long sticks in the air. They visited every house in the village, including those of non-Muria. Outside each house, the boys formed into a long line and began to push their sticks along the ground, digging it up a little and clearing the ash and leaves in one direction. When possible they dug up the neatly-plastered courtyards to the great annoyance of the housewives. As they danced they sang, 883x 796 241

Raha pindi kohko kohko.
Marka pindi kohko kohko.
Irpu pindi kohko kohko.

And so on with every sort of variation. The meaning of this was 'Break up and grind the char, mango, mahua' and then in the various changes—*Mao pindi* (grind the bison), *Dudo* (grind the breasts) or *Puda pindi* (grind the vagina). *Kohko* is said to represent the pounding and breaking of myrabolams against a stone; the elder dancers tapped their sticks on the ground 'as if they were breaking harra'.

While this demonstration was in progress before the house, the elder boys went inside with their baskets and were given mandia flour, mahua flowers, perhaps a copper coin. In some houses the people were far from friendly and threw dirty water and abuse at the boys. In every house where a motiari was living there was tremendous fun. The girls, some of whom ran round from house to house ahead of the boys, hid behind the door and when the boys approached jumped out with dirty water and threw it over them. In one house the two leaders were shut up inside with the Belosa and Dulosa,

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'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

[187]

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pude!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *bohorani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

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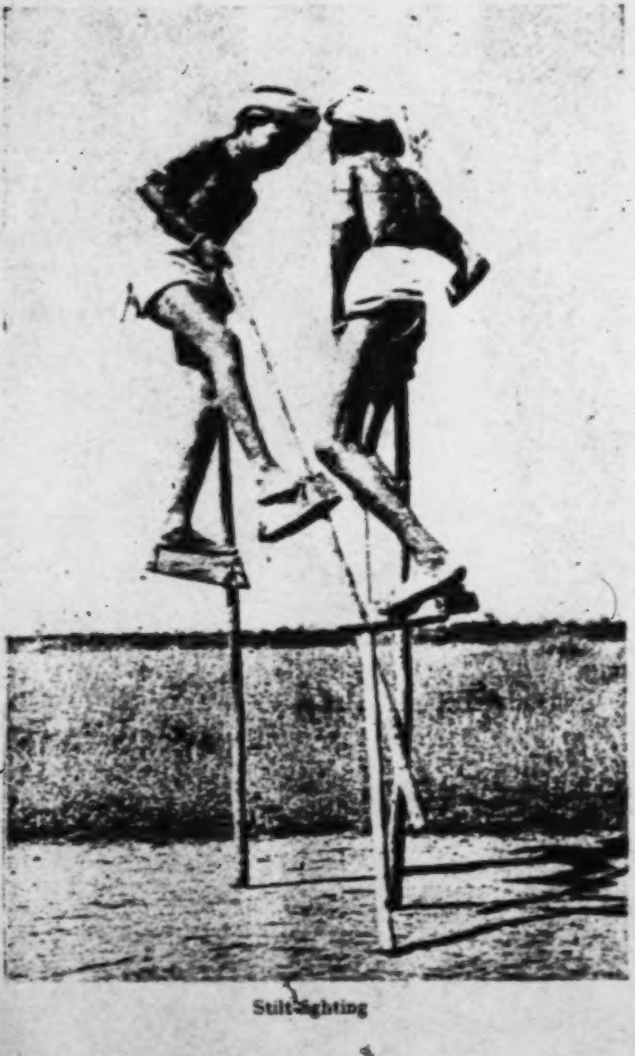
Plate CXLVIII



Stilt-fighting

[p. 650 (B)]

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

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The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6' high, to which foot-rests are attached 2' from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground. [524]

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lēya dēya loo loon thi,
Rai beda beda the
Nīna daha dharthe,
Gandri bursundi pāra pāra.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting you'. [539]

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[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Naga, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 63. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspur District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 193.

[3] The Angami Naga, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the combatants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, op. cit., p. 140.

x883 you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursundi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother
481 the village for the rest of the year.[1]

Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands
●796 on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the
[787] eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the egg-shells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

x883 There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept,
796 crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsiuni, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Siraha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

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[1] Russell records a Teli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 530. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 123.

[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1942), pp. 104ff.

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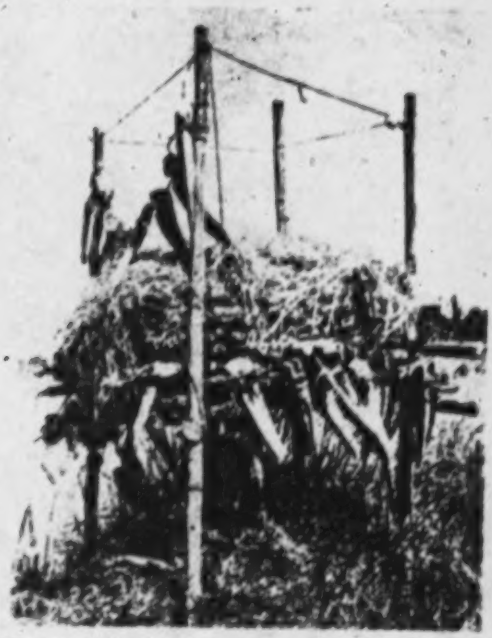
Stilts piled up outside
Phunder village

Plate CXLIX



Stilts piled up over
Dito Pen at Alor

[p. 652 (A)]

Plate CL

X883
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Ceremonial axe-cultivation:
preparing the Gaita's field

Cooking in the Gaita's field

[p. 652 (B)]

X 883 how can he do anything for you? Give me the bull and I'll do whatever you want'. So they sacrificed the bull to her and even before they had finished
796 cooking it, before they had time to eat it, down came a torrent of rain. 'This is a grand old woman', said the villagers, 'we must not forget her.' When the villagers again began to honour Bhimul at the Amavas festival Gorondi got very angry but the villagers said, 'Don't trouble us; go and knock over any boys you may find walking about on stilts and break their bones and hurt them'. So Gorondi went out and bothered the boys by knocking them over and injuring them wherever she could until they went to consult the Siraha. He told them that if they promised to honour Gorondi as well as Bhimul on the second day of the Korta Tindana Pandum she would give them no more trouble. Since then the boys of every village have honoured Gorondi in their festival and it is said that they never fall from their stilts or hurt themselves.

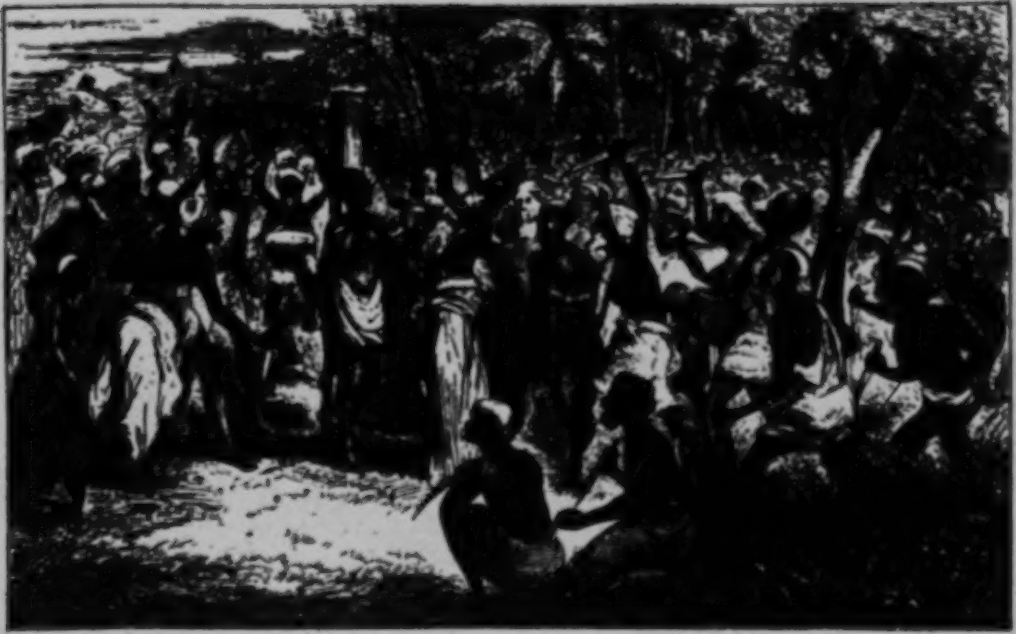
That this story is not universally known is shown by the fact that in some villages the broken stilts are piled up over the stone of Bhimul rather than of Gorondi and sometimes on a stone called Dito Pen which means literally the 'Stilt God'. But in most places stilt-walking is connected with Bhimul and his wife.

IV

X 883 A discussion of the ghotul and religion was obviously necessary. Here as
869 in every other aspect of Muria life the dormitory plays a dominant part. These boys and girls are consecrated to service; the consecration may seem to Western eyes primitive and crude, but it is real enough; it is very real to them. They live in a temple dedicated to the service of gods and men: the chelik and motiari fulfil that dedication admirably, at marriage and funeral, at festival and in the fields.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

[facing p.2]



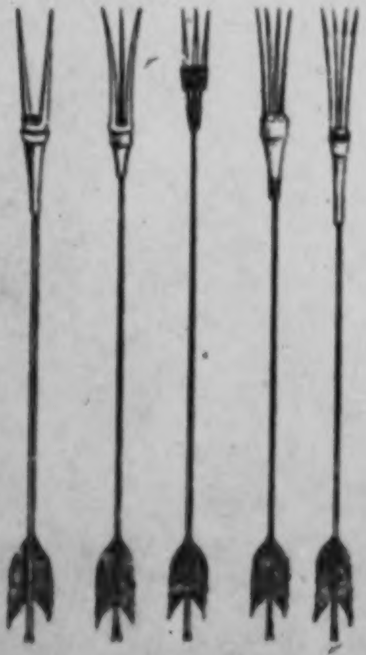
Ancient scene of Meriah Sacrifice at Goomsur, Khondistan
(From J. Campbell, 'A Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years Service', 1864)

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much
of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed
round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial
snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before
the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there
776 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped
787 and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they
can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen
for the coming harvest.

226 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water
262 from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described



Engram arrows
(Length about 3')

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But
the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177]
down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

776 in praise of the mahua tree, before which the new mahua flowers must not be eaten or used for liquor. Then comes a similar ceremony in honour of the mango. This generally falls in March. It may be preceded by a ceremonial fishing expedition. In April, preceded by a ritual hunt, comes the great Seed Festival, the Wijja Pandum, at which the seed then to be sown is consecrated.

At the beginning of the rains many of the Maria now observe the Halba festival of Hareli or Amavas. As the crops ripen, there begins a series of Harvest Festivals or (as a literal translation of their Gondi name would have it) 'New Eating' Festivals. The first of these is for the small millets that ripen early. The next is for the new gourds and cucumbers. It is followed, at about the beginning of November, by the Nuka Nordana Pandum, a festival which falls at about the time of Diwali and is concerned with the new rice. Before this ceremony, the rice of the new harvest must not be husked or washed.

Towards the end of the year comes the Jata Pandum for new beans and pulses, and the Kare Pandum before which no one is allowed to cut grass or bamboo, or begin making clearings for cultivation in the forest.

In addition to this round of celebrations there are the festivals of the clan-gods, the Pen Karsita or Divine Games, which may be held at any time, and the commercial Mandai which are often combined with the clan festivals but are mainly great bazaars.

Dassara is the chief official festival of the State. It lasts fifteen days and is attended by elaborate ceremonies in which each of the aboriginal tribes has its special part to play. All the Maria headmen attend the celebrations in their official capacity, and there is a special Darbar at which they have the opportunity to place their grievances before the administration.

IV

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535 The great dance that has given the Bison-horn Maria their name is really a marriage dance. At its best it is a superb spectacle. The men, in their splendid head-dresses of bison horns and carrying their long drums, move in a large circle

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The Kali Durga Novena (Jawara) among the Gonds

Among the Gonds who live in the Maikal Mountains (about 100 miles east of Jubbelpur), the *Zwārā* ceremony enjoys special popularity. This is less the case among the Baiga, as Elwin declares. (434) This is significant because the Baigas, contrary to the Gonds, represent the more primitive and older population on the spot. Instead of *Zwārā*, the Hindi word *Jawārā* (barley) is used among the Gonds.

A sorcerer (called panda in this region) named Phulsa and living in the village Batondha, promulgated a *Jawārā* festival there in May of the year 1939. With regard to all essentials, the novena of the Gonds is comparable to that of the Bhils. Nevertheless the ceremony has its own coloring among the Gonds.

The magician (panda) of the Gonds, at least nowadays, only sows wheat although the ceremony bears the name *Jawārā* (barley). Thus he does not also sow wheat and barley as the Bhil magician does. Our panda Phulsa had gotten the wheat in earthen jugs (*kaltsa*) and in bamboo stands (*chatura*), which previously had been filled with dirt naturally. In this case one pot and one bamboo stand came from Phulsa himself; about 10 more had been contributed by other families. When the Panda is consulted in cases of illness, he frequently gives the direction that participation is necessary at the time of the next *Jawārā* festival. For this, the panda receives a goat or a chicken as a sacrificial offering. Panda Phulsa, to be sure, asserted that his Mata, who is naturally identical with *Kālī Durgā*, desires no bloody sacrifice from [182] him, but requires instead only the offering of coconuts. But that is by no means the case with all Gond pandas. With Phulsa there is only a greater degree of Hinduization recognizable, for he himself also explained that he had directly implored the mother goddess to demand no bloody sacrifices from him, but to be satisfied with coconuts.

The bamboo stands mentioned show two or even three "stories" (Plate XIV/2) to a certain extent. This is attained by splitting in various places, the strong bark of a bamboo pole which is as thick as an arm. These sections are then made into the shape of a funnel,

434. (Footnote 215), p. 64.

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in which other, and specifically thinner, bamboo splices are used. The basket-weaver does this job for a negligible compensation. Panda Phulaa had pots and bamboo stands standing in a little building supplementary to his house which was his cult place in general, as was demonstrated by the trident and other things.

The bamboo stands show a striking similarity to that remarkable structure over which the "unicorn" steer often extends his head in the well-known representations of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. Already much effort has been expended in order to interpret this representation. Up to this point no one has been able to offer a satisfactory explanation. (435) The bamboo stands used at the Jawārā festival of the Gonds caused me immediately and on the spot to think of the puzzling implements of the Indus culture. Meanwhile, I believe that in a special study, "Zentralindische Fruchtbarkeitsrieten und ihre Beziehung zur Indus-Kulture," (436) I have determined more closely the relations between the complexes named, and in any case have made their reality rather probable. The possibility is not excluded that the funnel-shaped sacrificial baskets, which are made of bamboo, and which are widespread from Assam to Eastern Indonesia, belong to the same group. (437)

435. Last treated by H. Mode, Indische Frühkulturen und ihre Beziehungen zum Westen (Basel, 1944), p. 54 f.

436. Appeared in Geographica Helvetica, Vol. I (Zürich, 1946), p. 165-177.

437. Heine-Geldern in G. Buschan, Illustrierte Völkerkunde Vol. II (Stuttgart, 1923), p. 860. "The funnel-shaped sacrificial baskets are widespread from Assam to Eastern Indonesia which they make by cutting lengthwise incisions into one end of a bamboo pole, bending these slits outward, and weaving bamboo strips or rotang through them horizontally. Planted in the ground at the other end, they serve as a sort of altar. Among the Was in Burma, the Kalingas

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> and Tinggian in North Luzon and the Bataks in Sumatra, it also serves as a temporary or permanent receptacle for the skulls acquired headhunting."

/183/ Let us return to our Panda Phulsa himself. During the nine Jawārā days he wears an iron ring around his neck. He does this because the Kālī Mātā of Calcutta is also decked out with such a ring. At the same time Phulsa has a pierced fruit hanging on a neck cord. The sādhu (438), he claims, placed it there. On the eighth day of the novena, the sacrifice of breads is carried out. The main celebration takes place on the ninth day. I had the opportunity to attend just this one on the spot.

The final celebration began around four o'clock in the afternoon. In front of the door of Panda Phulsa's house a so-called chauk (a magic square) was drawn on the ground with meal. In the vicinity stand three, four or up to five poles one meter tall. They represent the mother goddesses (Kālī Mātā and so forth). As a matter of fact, seven poles should be standing here, for seven mata's. But since Panda Phulsa has been living here only for a short time, this is explained by the fact that his arrangements are still incomplete, as was stated. At the feet of those mata's and, at the same time facing the chauk, lies the son of the Panda on his knees and ("possessed" by a mata) rotating his head back and forth. He is obviously supposed to succeed his father in office some day. Let it be mentioned here also that, according to the statement of the Gonds, the sorcerer is always "possessed" by only one deity, hence never by several deities. The baskets and bamboo stands are fetched out of the sanctuary and placed on the chauk.

In the procession which then takes place, the Panda's sister plays a chief role. If necessary she can also be represented by some other female. The Panda's sister carries the pot of wheat which he himself has prepared. (439) Previously the sister has already rubbed her

438. Sādhu = pious man ("saint").

439. The Panda's sister naturally reminds one of the girls among the Bhils who carries the water jug on which the wheat of the "little evil

spirits" stands or stood. 8. 6. 796

brother thoroughly with milk and turmeric dye (440); this mitigates, 171

> 440. The reddish-yellow color plays a significant role in the life of the Bhils, as well as other primitive tribes of India. We encounter its use especially in the wedding (footnote 230), p. 25 ff. and at the Tdoe (further below, p. 256 f.). 8 822

as they say, the otherwise easily aroused deities.

A younger man carries the pole fashioned after a standard, which represents the Marhai (441)-Mātā. In order to cause the /184/ bearer

> 441. The Marhai-Mātā is one of the seven mātā's of the panda. It seems that precisely her pole is gladly decorated with peacock tail feathers. As far as she is concerned, the Marhai-Mātā is considered a good goddess.

of this pole to be "possessed" by the Marhai-Mātā, the Panda has previously thrown rice kernels at the pole. The bearer of the Marhai-Mātā pole then rather rapidly shows that he is restless and runs jerkily here and there with it, as though a secret power were driving him. The end of the pole threatens several times to come into contact with the ground—it looks as if an invisible power were driving it. At such moments it is the wife of the Panda especially who raises a great hue and cry. Such contact actually may not take place. Otherwise all sorts of misfortune would have to come especially to the Panda's house.

The procession now proceeds to the nearest watering place, about 1,000 meters away. Apart from the pot which the Panda's sister carries, the other jugs and bamboo stands are distributed to a number of persons. The young people especially are there with hands ready to help. All at once the Panda swings up onto the shoulders of a strong and still younger man. He rides him as a horse (Plate XIV/3). As he told later, the Mātā suddenly suggested that to him. To the question what would have happened if her choice had fallen upon a weaker person, he answered quickly and certainly that nothing would have happened; for in such a case the Mātā would surely have come to his aid with the necessary strength. This bearer, incidentally, is afterwards paid for his effort with a coconut. Fortunately for him, the Panda Phulsa is a slight and light person.

On the way, the procession has to pass the house of the somewhat more respected Gond, Churaman by name. At the suggestion of the Mātā, as he says again, Phulsa causes the procession to halt here. Actually everything had certainly been agreed upon previously with the pious Churaman. Churaman wears the Brahman band, and thus shows he is relatively greatly Hinduized. In his house everything is well prepared. Churaman has two wives: the first is barren, and the second presented him with a son who is sickly. On a brass dish, the first wife brings the following gifts to the Panda who is sitting in the foreyard of the house: a coconut, two pineapples, milk and greens, on which holdi (turmeric) is sprinkled. The Panda accepts these gifts, but they are intended for the mātā. Over the head of the childless woman the Panda swings his scourge made of cowtail hair and says: "I will give you children." In this way the evil spirits (bhūts) are supposed to be driven out, and thus the barrier in the way of children made to disappear. Above the sickly boy of the second wife Phulsa makes similar motions and says: "I will make you healthy!"

/185/ The stop at Churaman's house lasted about one-quarter of an hour. Immediately afterwards the procession is continued. About 200 meters before the watering place there is again a pause for three to five minutes, and a smoke sacrifice is quickly offered.

Having arrived at the watering place, all participants stick a few of the delicate wheat plants behind their ears. Everything else—hence the plants along with the dirt sticking to them—is sunk in the water, but to be sure the earthen jugs are carefully spared; they are taken home in order to make them serviceable again for practical life. But since no profane usuage is known for the bamboo stands, they are simply left lying on the spot after they have been emptied. No difficulties were encountered when I picked them up and took them along for my collections. A general greeting (embrace) forms the conclusion of the Jawārā celebration.

In summary, the following is given as the purpose of the exercise: the Mātā is supposed to protect everyone and everything and to allow them to grow and thrive in health and prosperity.

Gond AW32

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Jawārā Song

1. Behind the bar (tree) stands the pipal tree.
By the door stands the fruit-bearing nim tree.
Ho Mata, you are good.
2. Under the nim tree hangs a swing.
Who is to be swung?
Ho Mata, you are good.
3. The Dewi (mata) sits on the swing,
And the servant swings."
Hanuman (the monkey) speaks: Swing to (i.e., he murmurs hm, hm).
Ho Mata, you are good.
4. Swinging, swinging, she (Dewi) became unconscious,
And the neckband tore apart.
Ho Mata, you are good.
5. Who will pick up the beads (which have fallen on the ground)?
Who will put the string of beads back together?
Ho Mata, you are good.
6. The goddess has picked them up.
And the servant helped her.
The gardener put it (the string of beads) back together.
Ho Mata, you are good.
/186/ 7. Well, well, Mata, I have sung this song.
O goddess Hinglaj (442), bless (us)!

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442. "Hinglaj, said to be derived from Sanskrit hingula, a preparation of mercury with sulphur, vermilion: possibly, on account of the smearing of a sacred stone with red pigment, . . ." W. Crooke, ERE, Vol. VI, p. 715. Under the name Hinglaj the great mother goddess is venerated in Baluchistan, west of the Hingol River, near its mouth. The Hinglaj Mātā is widely known in India.

Ho Mata, you are good.